

## Greg Livingstone - "EPC's Treasure of Expertise and Passion For Christ and the Great Commission" - Jeff Jeremiah

Rev Dr Greg Livingstone was awarded North American missions' highest honor on September 30 in Scottsdale, AZ. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Greg at a meeting of over 500 participants from 190 agencies and churches representing

35,000 missionaries from North America in every country of the world.

Greg was accompanied by his wife, Sally at the event where they received a bronze statue of hands holding up the world and an oil painting of the two of them. (see above pictures) They make their home in High Wycombe, England just outside of



Greg and Sally Livingstone at awards ceremony



Greg and Sally Livingstone's oil painting

London.

Greg was founder of Frontiers, an agency that focuses exclusively on planting churches in the Muslim world.

He has been serving as an EPC World Outreach missionary for the past 20 years and currently holds the position of Senior Associate and Coordinator

of the Engage 2025 initiative to plant EPC churches in ten Muslim people groups by the year 2025. More than half of his time is now spent with EPC World Outreach ministry.

The Lifetime Achievement award is

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Gathering with Greg Livingstone where he received the Lifetime Achievement award were mission pastors, Ron and Dan from Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis and World Outreach Director George Carey.

### How To Recruit New Missionaries To EPC World Outreach Teams!

By Greg Livingstone

Firstly, think about how your church "recruits" staff for your church.

- You pray asking the Lord of the Harvest to lead you to potential candidates
- You write out a job description
- You advertise the job description. "Wanted: people from our church for the most exciting job in the world"
- You call, or approach potential persons in the church, or that you've heard about who you think might have the qualifications and vision for the task required. You interview, explaining the vision/challenge to be undertaken
- You make an offer...

*Why should it be different when the Lord wants you to recruit missionaries to go overseas to be part of a church planting team?*

Take the person you're thinking about to lunch; dream with them how God could use them to contribute to a team effort "where Christ is unknown" [e.g. Malaysia, Bihar, India, Pakistan, Sumatra, or Siberia]. Give them some literature from World Outreach

If they want to 'check it out', connect the potential recruit with World Outreach.

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# Pastor "Finds His Place" In EPC Denomination Serving On EPC's World Outreach Committee

The following letter was written by Rev Don Elliot (below picture on right) to his EPC congregation in Corinth, MS following last June's General Assembly meeting in Cordova, TN

June 27, 2011

I attended my fourth General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church last week and it was the best of the four.

It was best not because of who was with me (Randy Long and Bobby Scott), even though we had a blast. It was not best because of where we met (Hope Church), even though it was impressive and hospitable. It was not best because of seeing old and new friends (the old ones were from PCUSA days and the new ones are from the current EPC days), even though that fellowship was sweet and encouraging. It was not best because of the news of other PCUSA churches coming into the EPC in the near future, even though that is giving rapid growth and change to the EPC. And it was not best because of the worship, even though that is usually the hallmark of the EPC GA.

No, from my perspective, this General Assembly has been the best I have attended because I have found my place in the new denomination: working with the World Outreach Committee. The World Outreach Committee (WOC) gives leadership to the EPC in world missions, and this is an exciting time for world missions in the EPC.

### Exciting Future

George Carey, the director of World Outreach, who we had as our Missions Sunday speaker two years ago, is leading the EPC into an exciting future. Let me give you a bullet list of what I saw at this GA that is evidence of a throbbing, vibrant and focused mission future in the EPC:

- The WOC met and interviewed a new missionary couple for full time mission work in Budapest.
- The GA commissioned 4 new missionary couples and a single woman.
- The full slate of Associates for Mission Advancement (AMA) was announced. These four AMAs will promote missions in all the EPC presbyteries.

- The Prayer Network led by Phil Thrash (who was our Mission Sunday speaker this year) was promoted with the goal of at least one Intercessor in each EPC congregation committed to praying one hour a week for missionaries. We have several Intercessors already here at First Pres.
- A new website for the Prayer Network was announced that will allow the Intercessors to enter in a secure manner in order to get immediate prayer requests from missionaries on the field.
- A new missionary couple, Jim and Barb Murphy, was introduced as called to lead the Member Care aspect of WOC. Member Care is the care and support that is given to EPC missionaries. A goal has been set to have each EPC missionary visited on the field by at least one person from the EPC each year.
- The work of Chris and Debbie Gibson (who is one of our church's newly supported missionaries) was highlighted. They lead a missionary care / counseling ministry in Budapest, Hungary. I expect the Gibsons to visit us in Corinth this summer.
- The focus on theological education for missionaries was launched as new missionary, Bruce Anderson, concentrates on coordinating the persons and agencies that can help missionaries, both foreign and indigenous, go deeper in their biblical and theological training for ministry.
- I heard several times Greg Livingstone, who is the Senior Associate for Mission and who is going to be our Mission Speaker next February, challenge the EPC to go from supporting almost 50 missionaries to supporting 300 missionaries.....one for every EPC congregation.



A cooperative agreement between English Language Institute China (ELIC) and EPC's World Outreach was signed at the ELIC headquarters in Fort Collins, CO. Pictured at the signing (L-R) ELIC staff members, Ashley and Dave, World Outreach Director, George Carey and World Outreach Committee member, Don Elliot.



- A celebration was held for an EPC missionary success story in the establishing of a presbytery (6 churches) in Kazakhstan in middle Asia. This missionary effort started about 20 years ago when there were no Reformed churches in this predominately Muslim country. Yet six churches were planted, local pastors were trained and elders were ordained. Our own Ben Long will be going to Kazakhstan this summer to work with other college students from Second Presbyterian in Memphis led by Rev. Dan Burns, one of the missionaries to Kazakhstan who has now come back to the States where he will be the new Mission Pastor at Second.

**Engage 2025**

- A progress report was given on Engage 2025 which is an effort to repeat the success story of Kazakhstan. The goal of Engage 2025 is to encourage presbyteries to team up to send up to 10 mission teams to parts of the world where there is now no church. I had some conversations at GA that hopefully will lead to FPC, Corinth, having a part in Central South Presbytery's effort in Engage 2025. More of that later.

- And last, but definitely not least, was the presence of the English Language Institute of China (ELIC) at this General Assembly. This is the mission agency that hosted my trip to China in May. It was a joy to see others who were on that vision tour with me and to reminisce about what the Lord is doing in sending Christians to teach English in China. Dave, the tour host, had a booth at this GA and was very pleased with all his new contacts in the EPC about ELIC. Bobby Scott was able to have a long, sit down visit with a couple who will be new EPC missionaries in the future. They will be going to China next summer working with ELIC. We hope to add them to our roster of supported missionaries.

**Things looking up**

And I would not be surprised if I missed something going on with World Outreach at the General Assembly. I heard several comments from pastors and elders that things were really looking up for world missions in the EPC. You bet they are!! And we here in Corinth are a part of that!!

But right now let me ask you to simply pray for the work of world missions in the EPC. There is still a lot of work to be done. Let me suggest you pray a prayer like this....

*Lord God, we thank you for leading us to the EPC where we have been able to share our passion for world missions. We ask You to bless us at FPC, Corinth, and the World Outreach work in the EPC so that the Great Commission will be obeyed and many people (and peoples) will be saved through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Lead more EPC churches to support missionaries. Guide more EPC members to commit to be Intercessors to pray for missions and missionaries. Move presbyteries to get engaged in Engage 2025 so that there might be a church (or a presbytery – a group of churches) where there are none today. Bless George Carey as he directs WO and use the AMAs to unite the entire EPC into a mission-minded and mission-fulfilling denomination. We praise Your Name, o Lord, as the One Who has always had the world on Your heart. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Lord of all. AMEN.*

I am His and yours,  
Don

**Why Send Expensive American Missionaries?**

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$.....???????????

Rev. Dr. Greg Livingstone, Senior Associate World Outreach

**D**oesn't it make more sense to support the nationals who know the language, are closer culturally, and can live on much less money?

Absolutely correct...IF

- The Christians in any given country actually do know the same language as the churchless people group.
- The Christian citizens are of the same 'tribe' or people group as those needing church planters. But if there is no church among a people, there are NO Christians among them...NO NATIONALS TO BE SUPPORTED! It doesn't rain here on both the righteous and the unrighteous because there are no righteous present.

For example, World Outreach

is rebuilding a team among the Malay Muslims of Malaysia. We are searching for at least four more Americans from EPC churches to join that team. Why? Because even if an EPC church offered a high salary to a Malaysian Christian (Chinese, Indian, or East Malaysian Tribal) **THERE ARE NONE WILLING TO RISK BEING A FULL TIME EVANGELIST AMONG THE MALAY MUSLIMS!** The same scenario is true in Pakistan.

The Christians in Muslim lands are NOT from Muslim backgrounds, and having been forced to be 'second-class' citizens, and often persecuted by the Muslim majority, they for the most part don't really care if the Muslims DO GO TO HELL! "Best place for 'em" is a common attitude.

Of course, it is preferable to support

national workers in Kenya, Argentina, Southern Sudan, Mexico, or the Philippines. It may even be paternalistic NOT to!

But which nationals can we support who sense a call to Libya, or the Siberian Tatars, or to the 98% of Pakistanis who are Muslims? There are no known followers of Christ in Mary, Turkmenistan (a city of over a million) or among the 50% of the population of Eritrea!

Can you find a Somali who will be an apostle to his people in Somalia? If so, connect us!

**THEREFORE**, the focus of EPC's World Outreach is recruiting pioneer church planting teams of Americans to go to totally UN-engaged Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Tribal, and Chinese peoples WHO HAVE NO KNOWN WITNESSING CHRISTIANS IN RESIDENCE AMONG THEM!

**There are no nationals in those places to support! Get it?**



# Outstanding Leaders Set Higher Standards For Themselves

By EPC Stated Clerk, Rev Dr Jeff Jeremiah

**L**eaders are defined by standards that are beyond those who do not lead. Often, those standards are not imposed on them by others, they're self-imposed. Great leaders always expect more from themselves than from their followers, and they willingly put forth the extra effort required to meet those higher standards. That's a quality of leadership. The phrase "make every effort" occurs six times in the NT. In those six uses you find six commitments, or essentials to effective, outstanding spiritual leadership.

One of the great post-World War II evangelical leaders in America and the world was Dr. Richard C. Halverson. He was a colleague of men such as Billy Graham and Bill Bright. In the first year of my ministry (1980-1981), I had the privilege of being mentored by him. I am amazed, more than 30 years later, how much of what he told me still stays with me. I want to sprinkle his wisdom across the comments I'd like to make about two of these six "make every effort" commitments of the Christian leader.

## Stamp On The Church

Dr. Halverson said, "Over time, you will stamp who you are on your church. If you are optimistic, your church will become optimistic. If you are loving, it will be loving. If you are angry or stingy, over time your church will become angry or stingy." The point being, who you are matters.

An essential of Christian leadership

is a commitment to integrity. II Peter 3.14: "Make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him." What does it mean to be spotless and blameless? Does it mean you're supposed to be perfect, make no mistakes? Of course not! Spotless and blameless doesn't mean perfect, but it does mean to have integrity. How do you maintain integrity if you make mistakes? To be a person of integrity you're authentic, honest and transparent. You don't gloss over your faults or hide your mistakes. Those who do that will fail, according to Proverbs 28.13 "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them receives mercy."

A person of integrity does not claim to have it all together. On the contrary, a person of integrity can say, "This is where I'm strong, this is where I'm weak (and where I need help)." Some leaders say, "I know I'm not perfect," but they want you to think they're omni-competent, they can do it all. The problem with omni-competent leaders is that they aren't and they can't. They're great candidates for burnout.

## Handling Conflict

Being a person of integrity means you "walk the talk," what you say is what you do. You not only teach it, you model it. I've found that a major integrity issue for Christian leaders is the way they handle conflict. They can preach and teach Matthew 18.15ff but don't do it: "That's not who I am." "I'm not wired to confront that way." If you say one thing and do another you're undercutting your ability to lead effectively.

In English, there is a one letter difference between truth and trust. These two really go together. All effective leadership is built on trust. And trust comes from having a reputation for telling the truth,

consistently telling the truth, especially when it's hard to tell the truth. If you're going to be a leader, you've got to have people willing to trust you. If you're going to have people trust you, you will always tell people the truth.

Second, as a leader you commit to be an encourager. Romans 14.19 says, "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification." Edification means to build up, to edify, to encourage. The importance of this commitment is illustrated in a book on leadership I'm currently reading. Five hundred successful leaders were asked, "What's the most important skill of a successful leader?" Possible answers included: 1) strong passion and commitment to success, 2) outstanding communication skills, 3) great intelligence and 4) understands people - how to reach, encourage and lead them. Understanding people was selected twice as much as any other answer.

## Here are three ways to encourage and build up people.

First, show them respect. One way to do that is to give that person your undivided time and attention - which means ignore or turn off your cell phone! Especially in the 21st century, when you give someone your undivided attention, you express respect and appreciation for him or her. Second, be a great listener. Listen especially in order to understand the other person's perspective and interact with it. More often than not, I've found people simply want to be acknowledged and heard, not agreed with. One of Steven Covey's seven "habits" is "seek first to understand, then be understood."

Third, celebrate successes. At my former church we always celebrated the successful conclusion of our senior high short term mission trip - "Our kids need the encouragement and

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affirmation.” Are our kids the only people who need this? I don’t think so.

In Good to Great, Jim Collins writes, “As a leader, when things go right, look out the window. When things go wrong,

look in the mirror.” That is, when you’re successful, look “out the window” for people to give credit to. When a mistake is made, look “in the mirror” step up and take responsibility. Ronald Reagan understood this principle in part when he said, “Its amazing how much can be

accomplished when you don’t care who gets the credit.” Given the challenges and difficulties we all face in 2011, encouraging and building up those we lead can not only be affirming but life-giving.

## “The Budapest Garden House” A New Place For Missionary Care & EPC World Outreach Workers

*Refuge, Retreat and Revitalization in Budapest, Hungary*

**T**he reality of missionary life often means dealing with hardship, pain and persecution. Imagine what having a team mate murdered because he dared to share his faith in Christ or what having your house purposefully set on fire would do to your family emotionally. Where would you turn, where would you go for help?

Chris and Debbie Gibson responded in 2003 to God’s call to “Missionary Care” by becoming missionaries themselves and moving to the field in Budapest, Hungary. Chris is a licensed professional counselor and an ordained EPC pastor having served in pastoral ministry for 20 plus years and Debbie as an educator, mother of 4 and pastor’s wife. The Gibsons, now veteran EPC – “World Outreach” Missionaries serve missionaries from Central Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, providing professional mental health services, counseling, post traumatic stress care, debriefings, 3rd Culture Kids ministry, pastoral care and spiritual direction as well as leadership development for Missionaries and Nationals.

The newly secured “**Budapest Garden House**” is allowing the Gibsons to greatly expand the care they provide, and is **strategically located in a purposefully non-Muslim city allowing those needing care to be brought out of difficult and stress producing circumstances facilitating care and recovery.** The facility sits on a 2 acre garden/park like setting, with an existing 3 bed room guest apartment, rooms suitable for offices for providing counseling for those who come needing help, meeting rooms for seminars/workshops and several other buildings for future additional guest rooms, a possible future chapel and living quarters for Chris, Debbie and their daughter Rebekah.

**Debbie and Chris are quick to tell you that finding this place was a God thing!** For the past three years they have had a guest apartment for missionaries needing help and its continual use convinced them of the need to continue to provide such a facility. However, in April of this year they learned that the apartment would no longer be available. So immediately they started looking to replace it never dreaming



Missionary care at Budapest Garden House

they would find the Ministry Center that they had envisioned eight years ago when God called them to this work.

**The Gibsons need to raise just over 1,500 per month in order to make this a sustainable reality.** This will cover rent/utilities for office space, a three bed room guest apartment for missionaries, their families and national Christian leaders coming for counseling/training, etc, meeting rooms for seminars, workshops, as well as facilities for retreats for individuals and teams needing spiritual renewal.

Chris and Debbie believe that **Missionaries Are Too Valuable To Lose**, and are pleased to offer a place where missionaries can receive professional, yet loving care - the “**Budapest Garden House**”.

What an Opportunity To Provide Refuge, Retreat and Revitalization for Our Missionaries, their Families and for Nationals in Christian Leadership.

If you believe, as do the Gibsons that **Missionaries are in fact too valuable to lose**, you can partner with EPC “World Outreach” and Chris and Debbie to provide this restful and healing place for those who give so much to serve our Savior. Please give directly to “World Outreach”- EPC - please mark contribution for “Gibson – Budapest Garden House #249.”



# Engage 2025 Initiatives Alive and Well in SE Asia

In God's sovereign manner, He has led the EPC's World Outreach Engage 2025 initiative to plant churches among Muslim people groups in Southeast Asia in two countries that are very close to one another, Malaysia and Sumatra. Already these initiatives have attracted two World Outreach families to locate in these countries and begin the task of attracting team members to join them.

The first initiative in Sumatra is under the leadership of a network of churches from Presbytery of The West. A World Outreach couple has been on the field there since April of 2011 involved in language study.

The other initiative in Malaysia

seeks a similar network of churches from one of the other EPC presbyteries to help guide and nurture development on the southernmost end of West Malaysia. A World Outreach couple previously living on the northernmost end of West Malaysia, is relocating to the south to head up a church plant among the unchurched/unengaged Malay Muslim people group.

EPC's World Outreach Director George Carey along with Eastern Associate Rev Phil Thrash conducted a survey trip to these areas in September and came away convinced of God's sovereign choices of those who are leading



One of many mosques in Malaysia and Sumatra - sites of two Engage 2025 initiatives.

these ministries and impressed by the conviction and commitment of the World Outreach workers on the ground there. (see pictures of the trip on next page)

For further information about Engage 2025, the plan to plant ten new churches among unengaged Muslim people groups by the year 2025, contact the Engage 2025 Coordinator, Rev Greg Livingstone at [greg.livingstone@epc.org](mailto:greg.livingstone@epc.org).





World Outreach couple Rev. Dr. David & Debbie Walker - Life Coaches to EPC World Outreach team leaders in Malaysia & Sumatra with George Carey and Phil Thrash in Singapore.



This EPC World Outreach couple is relocating to the southern part of West Malaysia to lead an Engage 2025 initiative. Phil Thrash shoots scenes in their back yard for an Engage 2025 video production. A network of churches is needed to back this initiative in Johor, Malaysia.



World Outreach couple (in middle) as part of a Sumatra Church Planting Team. They head Presbytery of the West Engage 2025 work to develop another team there.



EPC World Outreach Family on north side of West Malaysia with George Carey and Phil Thrash on recent survey trip.

## *EPC World Outreach Engage 2025 Short Term Mission Trips This Summer (May-July)*

*Join Greg Livingstone*

*and EPC Team-mates!*

Tyumen, Russia (Siberia)

Sumatra, Indonesia

High Wycombe, England



Jim Foote, Sally Foote, Nan McCallum



Kelly Downs



Phil Thrash

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# Texas Church Gives \$338.67 Per Member To The EPC's World Outreach Ministry

By Hannah Vanbiber

EPC of Marshall, TX, has the highest per member missions giving of any church in the EPC. According to church members, the generosity is a result not of elaborate missions strategy, but rather a simple belief in the centrality of mission work to God's kingdom.

Elder Jim Bates, who helped start the church in 1985, recalls that missions support has always been an outworking of members' understanding of a Biblical church.

"I'm not sure we had a dynamic moment when we said 'We're going to be missions-minded,'" Bates said. "I think it just evolved through people who had a mission desire and Biblical understanding of the importance of missions, both foreign and domestic."

## Passion for missions

EPC of Marshall has about 120 members. The church's average per member gift to World Outreach is \$338.67, over \$119 more per member than any other church in the EPC. When asked how the church carries out its missions vision, the pastor, Craig Vanbiber, pointed to the passion of individuals rather than any elaborate planning on the part of leadership.

"It's not that we have this constant 'Let's think missions, let's think missions,' mantra," Vanbiber said. "We just do it. The missions focus was here long before I came five years ago and I hope it outlasts me."

## Revival

The church formed from a home group of believers who had experienced the locally famous Marshall revival of 1972. Hundreds of people in Marshall either came to the Lord or were renewed in their faith during this revival. Bates was part of this home group.

Orin Littlejohn, who served as Moderator of the EPC General Assembly in 2004, was part of a PCUSA church in Marshall at the time of the revival. After struggling through his church parting from Biblical doctrine, he called Bates and said, "We're joining you." Later, they discovered the EPC and established a church in the denomination.

## God's will

"Even when we were meeting in homes," Bates said, "we just believed that's what God's will was, that you support missionaries. Orin really emphasized this when he joined us, too, and along the way, other families joined us who were ultra missionary-minded."

For years, the service never included a passing of the offering plate. Instead, a "first fruits basket" sat in the back. One of the founding elders, the late George Rodgers, used to say, "God doesn't need our money, he needs us. And if he gets us, he'll get our money."

"The Lord always provided for our needs," Bates said. "Our people were cheerful givers."



World Outreach Committee-EPC Marshall, TX  
L to R: Wendell (Missions Conference Committee chairman) & Mary Jones, Don & Michele Spencer, Tammy Miga, Craig Vanbiber, Mike Miga (current Missions Committee chairman).

## Recession

This faith-based giving was central to the steady support of missionaries, which continued – and actually increased – even when most churches saw dwindling missions giving during recession.

"In 2009, when the whole economy took a dive," Vanbiber remembers, "one of our elders, George Damoff, brought to our attention that missionaries were beginning to suffer from dwindling support. The session voted to increase our missionary giving to cushion that loss. I don't think we've lowered it since."

A number of active church families, including the Damoffs, have children who have recently gone into the mission field.

"It's a joy to realize that when you're part of the Church," Vanbiber reflected, "a little congregation in a little city can have a global impact!"

## Seven Standards of Excellence for Short-Term Missions

By Dr. Jim Plueddemann-professor and chair of the Mission and Evangelism Department at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield Illinois

The general consensus of my students is that about a third of short-term experiences **do more harm than good**, about a third **make little difference**, and a third actually

**make a long-term contribution** to the development of the short-termer and to the field ministry. What can be done? The following suggestions make some

radical adaptations from the more common standards.

1. *God-Centered* – Is God honored through this experience?



## TO DEARBORN — WITH LOVE!

*By an EPC Pastor who travels extensively to Muslim fields.*

### **Name withheld for security...**

Recently, we had the joy of traveling to what some people call, “The Arab Republic of Dearborn” – home of what is thought to be the largest mosque in North America. Many of you have heard of Dearborn, Michigan but please don’t believe everything you hear in the media – even so called “Christian media.” While there is a huge population of Arabs there (perhaps 30%), we can assure you that “Sharia Law” has not taken over Dearborn! To the contrary, there is wonderful freedom to share about the Jesus of the Bible and many wonderful Christian workers are living and reaching out with love to Muslims there every day. Though our ministry is not based in Dearborn, please let us share about our recent trip there to plant seeds of the Good News among the Muslim people – *a people He dearly loves.*

## GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR IN THE MUSLIM NEIGHBORHOODS — WHAT A JOY!

It was a real joy to help with flier distribution for Josh McDowell Ministries and tract distribution for a ministry based in Dearborn! Practically every house had steps to climb before we could attach the door hangers and it was tiring. . .but it was worth every step to give these items to the Muslim people there. The fliers were coupons to receive Josh’s free books at his tent in the Arab Festival. The tracts contained a clear presentation of the Gospel.

## WHAT ABOUT YOU? DO YOU LOVE MUSLIMS?

Sadly, it seems to us that most Christians are either *afraid* or *angry* at Muslims. We encourage each of you to ask God for *His* heart for this people. Repent of accepting harmful stereotypes which block conversation, friendship, and witness. Please, don’t be like Jonah who ran away and later was bitterly angry because God forgave the Ninevites. *Be like Jesus: “the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost”* (Luke 19:10, NLT). Muslims need to be saved by Jesus – just like you. . .and just like us. You don’t have to go to Dearborn as we did. But wherever you carry the Good News, *let it be with love!*



*Josh McDowell in Dearborn*

What is it like in Dearborn in the Muslim neighborhoods? The area we covered was mostly filled with people of Lebanese descent. Their yards, flowers, and homes were so well kept. *Beautiful.* And the people? *Very friendly and warm to us* – graciously receiving our materials – even the smiling, giggling children pictured here.

Josh McDowell again gave away literally thousands of free Christian books in English and Arabic at his booth in the Arab Festival. His style is so *warm and friendly* as he relates to the Muslim people.

***Want to minister for 10 months on a team in Dearborn? Contact [phil.linton@wardchurch.org](mailto:phil.linton@wardchurch.org)***

### **World Outreach Missionary Prayer Network**

Become a prayer intercessor for World Outreach missionaries. Join 150 other EPC intercessors one hour per week. Contact Rev. Phil Thrash at [phil.thrash@epc.org](mailto:phil.thrash@epc.org)

2. *Gospel-Centered* – Will the trip contribute directly or indirectly to evangelism and developing committed followers of Christ?

3. *People-Sensitive* – Do participants appreciate and build on the giftedness of those they go to serve? Are they willing to listen and learn from them?

4. *Field-Focused* – Will the experience strengthen the ministry on the field? Is the trip actually strategic for the field?

5. *Long-term orientation* – Does the trip promote the development of long-term missions, more fervent prayer and sacrificial giving?

6. *Appropriate Preparation* – do short-termers gain a knowledge of God’s plan for the nations and an appreciation of cultural values?

7. *Through Follow-Up* – Does the trip lead to greater understanding and missions commitment by the sending church?

*(see page 7 for short-term trips this summer)*

# ITEN - The EPC's International Theological Education Network Receives God's and Others' Attention at EPC General Assembly

There was an evident presence of the Lord at the ITEN networking luncheon at the EPC General Assembly in Cordova, TN! ITEN is the EPC World Outreach's International Theological Education Network—a new initiative. Our room was packed and had people standing. It was an amazing, high-powered group, including seminary presidents, professors, missionaries, missions agency directors, and others. We presented the vision statement for ITEN and started discussions about building this network.

The Lord's hand was evident as networking to reach Muslims and other unreached people began immediately. Everyone left excited and ready to move forward. I believe wonderful things are ahead!

After the event was over, one EPC leader said that he felt an unusual anointing of the Holy Spirit falling on him. Wow! All this at a meeting about theological education during General Assembly—but that's what happens with work devoted to God's purpose! Please pray for ITEN as it grows.

## **ITEN's Vision**

ITEN is a ministry track of EPC's World Outreach working in tandem with our track for church planting among unreached peoples, particularly Muslims. Simply put, ITEN aims '... **to develop teachers among unreached peoples who will develop teachers among other unreached peoples.**'

The general purpose of ITEN is to serve the Lord's redemptive mission to unreached peoples of the world, particularly Muslims, through theological education and leadership development. To do this, we aim to inspire, grow, unite, and improve the EPC's theological education (TE) efforts in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Our goal is to develop mature, reproducing Christian leaders among unreached peoples who will lead their churches in reaching other unreached peoples.



Article written by Rev Bruce (last name withheld for security) World Outreach Missionary - ITEN (International Theological Education Network) Coordinator

Theological education is vital to missions, a key element in Jesus' commission to the church, 'Go... teaching...' (Matthew 28:19-20). It is an act of obedience. Evangelism and church planting is not enough; full cycle church planting requires the additional steps of training leaders who then develop disciples and leaders who also reproduce.

- 1) ITEN **identifies and connects** EPC missionaries, teaching elders, and church members who are doing international theological education, so we can
- 2) **foster relationships** as we **compile and share** our experiences.
- 3) We **recruit, deploy, and coach** teachers on the field who will train nationals for lasting fruit, especially to see nationals themselves engage in frontier missions.
- 4) We **find, share, or produce curriculum** materials;
- 5) **nurture effective methodologies**;
- 6) **promote strategic partnerships**;
- 7) **employ models** for TE;
- 8) **pursue translation** projects and **build libraries** where none exist;
- 9) **foster high educational standards** and **implement best practices** for cross-cultural TE; and
- 10) **engage in strategic thinking.**

We **focus these efforts on empowering and assisting nationals** as they advance their own educational programs and institutions in ways most suitable to their contexts. Evidence of our success will be the expansion of church planting among unreached peoples.

ITEN aims to build on two specific strengths of our Presbyterian heritage: missions among Muslims and missions that is holistic and transformational in every sphere of life and society.

To learn more and get involved, please contact Bruce, ITEN Coordinator, at [andersonb.ifr@gmail.com](mailto:andersonb.ifr@gmail.com).



ITEN at GA-prayer for unreached/unengaged peoples and ITEN's future...



# “The Mission of God”

By EPC Missionary, Robert Beirut, Lebanon

When we discuss the term mission, where do we begin? For some Christians, mission is an enterprise, or an action, carried out by people called to a specific task. For many, this means that missions take place somewhere “out there” and purports the idea that missionaries are adventurous people sent to leave his or her home culture for another.

Others understand that missions is to be about the whole action of God. The *missio Dei* (mission of God) calls all Christians, no matter what culture or context to participate in what God is doing in the world for His glory. Missiologists have argued that grounding the idea of mission in the whole action of God helps the church to understand that God is at work as a “missionary God” and to guard against reductionism of the mission of God. Darrell Guder, Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, remarks, “The church does not do mission, it is mission. By its very calling and nature, it exists as God’s ‘sent’ people.”

## Coming To Grips

Though believers know it’s the truth, it’s frightening to come to grips that we are all called to be a sent community witnessing for the gospel. Christians in all cultures need to understand that every time they set foot outside the church, work, or home, that we are all “sent” to demonstrate God’s love through words, yes, but principally through our deeds. When I consider what is “mission,” I think it is best understood in terms of the whole process of what God is doing in the here and now. As Christians, we are all called to live out our lives in a way that demonstrates what God has done inwardly in us through Jesus’ death on the cross, that which is sealed upon our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We live in a rapidly changing time. Mission scholars rightly point out we

exist in a post-Christendom world with the emergence of a vibrant global Christianity. This paradigm shift drives us to rethink the concept of mission. No longer can we reduce mission to a program performed by a select few in the church. Instead, we must realize that each of us is called to be a missionary of God in our communities for God’s mission.

## Calvin

Throughout centuries, Christians have demonstrated the mission of God by actively sharing their faith in word and deed in their local contexts. Bonnie Pattison, in *Poverty in the Theology of John Calvin*, highlights Calvin’s practical work among refugees in Geneva, noting that Calvin’s context was one of fluid political and economic challenges that resulted in Geneva’s inundation with migrants and refugees. Pattison emphasizes that Calvin responded to the pressing refugee issue both pastorally and practically.

So what is mission? It can best be expressed as a deep missional commitment to the truth of God’s revelation recorded in the Bible and interpreted as good news for all people, regardless of race, class, or political boundaries. But this missional commitment to Biblical truth also challenges our assumptions, our cultural idols, and calls us to place the gospel text at the center of our public worship, missiologically and prophetically proclaiming as Paul says, the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27)

It is clear that the Bible communicates that God is very much a missionary God. According to missiologist J. Andrew Kirk, “The Bible...[is] a book about mission from beginning to end, written by missionaries for missionaries!” As we shift our hermeneutical attention, reorienting our reading of the Bible as a missionary text for God’s missional people called to actively live out our missional vocation, we begin to



**Robert, EPC World Outreach Missionary in Beirut, Lebanon**

recognize we all are on a mission. We can no longer consider missions as a task designated for a specially-called person, or as the church’s activity conducted overseas in another culture. As Kirk writes, “Mission is quite simply, though profoundly, what the Christian community is sent to do, beginning right where it is located.” Welcome to mission!

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presented annually by Mission Exchange and Cross Global Link, two organizations that represent North American mission leaders. The two organizations voted after 159 cumulative years of separate existence to merge effective January 2012.

EPC Stated Clerk Rev Dr Jeff Jeremiah commented following Greg’s award, “What a blessing Greg Livingstone has been and continues to be to the EPC! He is the ‘EPC’s treasure’ of expertise and passion for Christ and the Great Commission.”

Greg joins an elite group of previous award winners including: Wesley Duewel, Ralph Winter, George Verwer, and Robertson McQuilkin each one described by their peers as “giants” in the world of missions.



### Is It Safe to Be Honest?

True or False? Personal struggles and needs that a missionary may have are signs of weakness.

The average person in an American church often thinks that is true. We tend to put missionaries on a spiritual pedestal, above the rest of humanity, so we think they don't need, or *shouldn't* need, any help.

That's the reason why so many missionary prayer letters seem somewhat bland, sanitized, devoid of the nitty gritty of life on the field. I tell missionaries that if they want to be prayed for, they need to be honest with people, and tell them about the struggles and hurts they experience. But the missionaries often respond by voicing their fears that if they are honest, their supporters will stop supporting them. "They only want to hear the success

stories," they say. "Our supporters want to know that they are getting the maximum 'bang for their buck', and if we tell them how hurting we are, they'll pull our support." This is more often true for churches than for individual supporters who are often friends, but it happens with friends, too.

Does your missions committee have a policy (written or not) that they only support "successful" missionaries? How do they define "successful"? As 21st Century Americans, success is very important to us, and we have come to believe that it should happen quickly. That attitude simply is not in accordance with the facts of the mission field. Over the past 2,000 years, the Kingdom of God has spread all over the globe. There are dedicated Christ-followers in every country on earth; but not in every ethnic group. For example, there are still over 200 Muslim people groups with more than 100,000 people each, who do not have any significant Christian work among them. The people in those groups don't know anyone like them who is a follower of Christ. And there are reasons why those groups are still unengaged after 2,000 years of missionary activity.



**Rev Dr Jim and Barbie Murphy,**  
New EPC World Outreach Member  
Care Coordinators

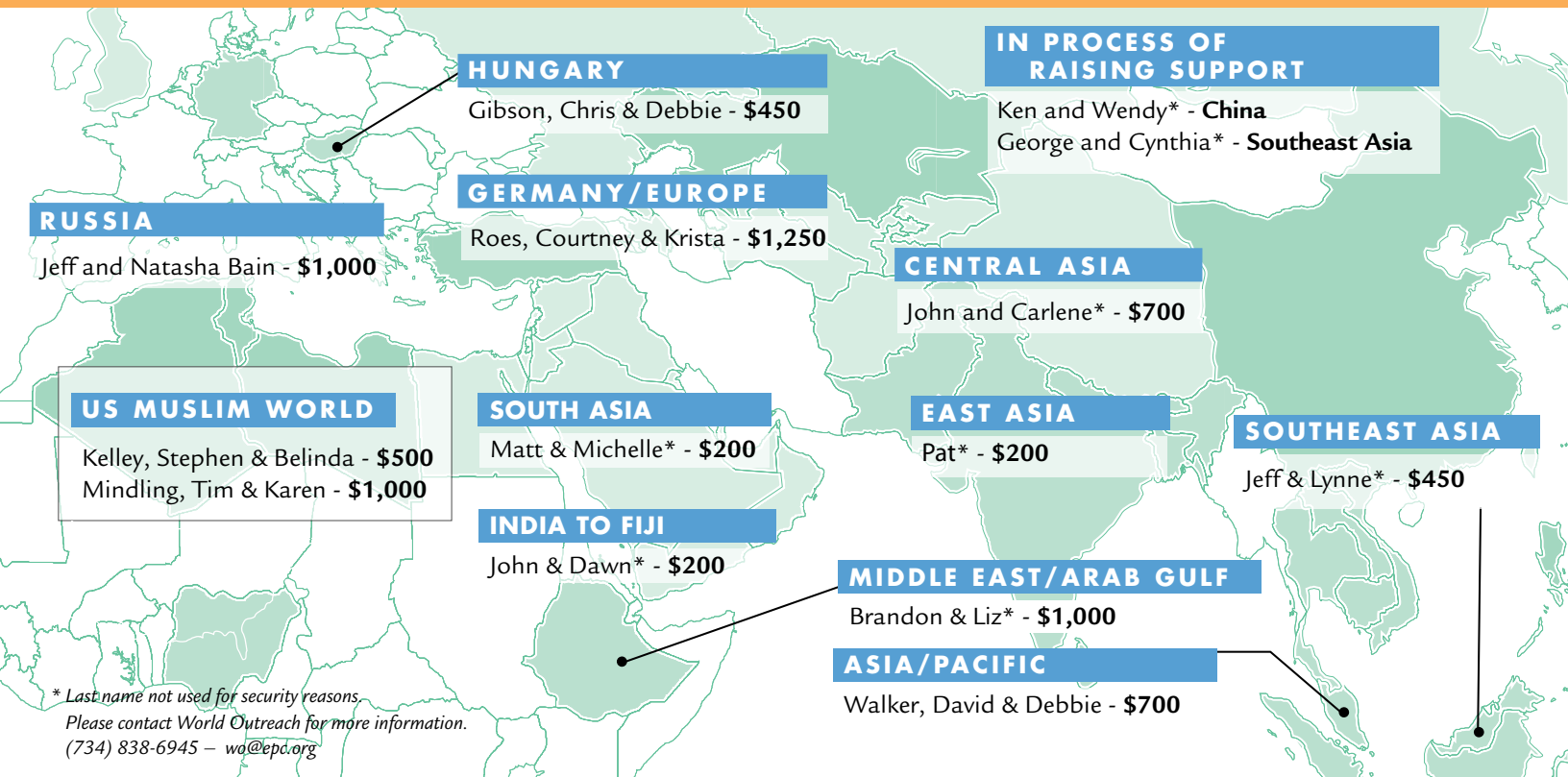
They live in unpleasant places; the governments in those areas are hostile to the faith; the cultures of these people are highly resistant to the gospel. What does "success" look like for a worker in a place like that? Would it be ok for a missionary in one of those places to admit that they were struggling?

How could you convince your missionary friends that it is safe to be honest with you? Here's a suggestion: tell them you read this article, that you really want them to be honest with you, and that it will not affect your support, but will instead motivate you to pray more earnestly for them. And then share a personal struggle of your own. If you are honest and vulnerable with them, they may be open with you.

## We Need Your Support

### Monthly Shortages

Many of our WO missionaries continue to need additional monthly support. Please prayerfully consider becoming a part of the support team for our missionaries listed below. Contact the World Outreach office at 734.838.6945 or wo@epc.org to learn more about becoming a donor.



\* Last name not used for security reasons.  
Please contact World Outreach for more information.  
(734) 838-6945 - wo@epc.org