

July 2017

Missions

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Thinking It Through

BY PHIL BARNES

The Call of God

Don't you wish for a burning bush sometimes? You know, an undeniably miraculous sign, clearly from God, with simple directions you can go out and do. No wondering. No angst. Just get on with it in the knowledge and assurance that you are doing exactly what the Lord wants you to do. Sounds good, doesn't it?

When there aren't burning bushes handy, we tend to fill the void. Sometimes we use legalistic structures in which we can operate safely without needing to hear God's voice. Or we outsource our discernment to a Christian "guru" who *has* heard the Lord and prescribes the only acceptable way for every aspect of Christian living. Or even worse, we get caught up with the latest phenom who claims to have discovered the "Getting-God-to-do-what-you-want-Him-to" secret, which is really "How to get God to hear and respond to the call of *Me*" instead of the other way around.

So, if we discard these imitations and don't receive a clear, miraculous call, how do we know the call of God for our lives? Have you ever struggled with not being *sure* if the Spirit of God is really moving you or if you just have indigestion? Sometimes we live in this gray fog of "not being sure of God's call" because then we can feel less responsible to actually respond. It allows us to excuse our reluctance and resistance as "confusion."

Perhaps we should think about how people in the Bible responded to their clear call of God. Since it was God doing the calling, we may assume that the person was the best choice for the job. Surely, they must have all believed they were perfectly suited and qualified for what God called them to do and were thrilled and excited to be selected for this divine privilege. However, Moses, Jonah, Isaiah and Jeremiah come to mind as a few who did not feel either capable or eager to "get on with it" even though they had miraculous, undeniable clear calls of God. It seems the clarity of the call was not the real issue. So, what *is* the real issue?

How about this—what if the newest app for your phone was the *Call of God* app? That would be cool, I guess. It would be exciting to download, open it up and discover God's call for my

life. But what if there was then the option to select the "weekly" function, or the "daily" function, giving me His latest direction. Would I select those options? Or what if you could select "push notifications" on the lock screen, with a special ringtone, informing me that the Lord has a direction He wants me to take *right now*? Sounds pretty invasive, pretty life-dominating. And, after all, I have heard Christians ought not to let their phones dominate their lives. Better not select that one.

Bear with me here, especially those of you who don't like this kind of analogy. What if this *Call of God* app *only* had the "daily" and "push notifications" features? What if no yearly or lifetime notifications were given—no turning it on for the big decisions only, then quickly off for the rest of the time? What if the only way to get to the lifetime call of God was through listening and responding daily?

I am often approached by folks who want help to determine if the Lord is calling them to full-time missions work—especially overseas, life-altering missions work. They want to know the big call of God for their life. But we sometimes get these things the wrong way around.

Those who routinely hear the Lord telling them to help around the house a little more, to bite their tongue, to speak up, to help a friend, to help an enemy, to meet with believers even though they feel like staying home, to take better care of themselves, to stay behind to help, to fill that gap in the kids' program, to unload the dishwasher, to prepare for worship—these are the ones who find themselves someday in a Middle East country, or working with inner-city youth, or making an impact in their neighborhood, or reaching a new tribe, or serving in a hundred different ways wherever they are. They do this while knowing that they are called of God because, while others were waiting for the burning bush, they were learning to listen for the call of God every day and to respond to the "push notifications" vibrating in their spirits, their hearts and their minds. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14) ■

Phil Barnes, MSC executive director.

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MISSIONS IN CONTEMPORARY **AFRICA**

New Challenges and
Opportunities


BY KARL PETERSON

For generations, missionaries heading to Africa required training in hunting and how to combat witchcraft and prevent tribal warfare. Along with their Bibles, missionaries brought guns to protect themselves and compasses to explore the uncharted inland. Maybe some of this is still needed, but Africa is changing with the advent of a globalizing economy and post-independence. In addition to the training and provisions above, missionaries and national workers in contemporary Africa face new realities. Here are a few of the important issues facing Africa today that assemblies need to keep in mind as they send workers to this great continent.

Village to city

Africans are moving to cities like never before in their history and are doing so more rapidly than anywhere on earth. This doesn't seem like a big deal to North Americans since more than 75 percent of us live in cities. However, rapid urbanization is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa compared to the rest of the world. In just a few years, it will be more common to find an African in a place like sprawling Nairobi than in a hut in a village.

Why are Africans rushing to cities? Poverty, unrest, and ill health *push them from* rural areas. Jobs, schools, hospitals, and hope *pull them to* the city. The World Bank claims that urbanization will be the single most important factor in the transformation of African society in the next generation. The Church needs to keep up with this reality as it prepares missionaries and trains national workers. Church leaders come to our annual conference and ask for help to shep-



herd their new urban congregations that face hopeless poverty, crime, corruption, the high cost of running church ministries, religious pluralism, the clash of world-views, and ethnic diversity. They also struggle with the generation gap between the elders who were raised in the villages and the youth who know only urban life.

Preparing workers for today's and tomorrow's Africa means training them for urban ministry as a way of reaching into rural areas. Yes, African cities have crime, acute poverty, overt corruption, and a host of other maladies, but the Church needs to be there as the continent moves into town. Studying how the apostles conducted urban ministry in their journeys would be a great place to start.

Country to country

Africans are on the move not only from village to city but from one country to another within the continent. Wars and job opportunities have shuffled Africans around the entire continent. Unrest in Somalia has brought many to Egypt in search of peace. Employment opportunity in Lagos, Nigeria, has brought in thousands from war-torn Liberia.

There have been a few unsuccessful attempts on the continent to form something like a "United States of Africa" to encourage intracontinental travel and cooperation. The best that has been achieved so far are a few regional trading blocks and more porous borders.

This means that "foreigners" are no longer just white westerners but the many from across Africa who are now living outside their homelands. This is a volatile recipe for xenophobia and hate crimes against outsiders, which those of us who live on the continent see regularly.

But all this cross-border movement has given the Church a great opportunity to reach to the ends of the earth because the ends of the earth are now coming to us! Algerian students are at South African universities, now within easy reach of the Gospel of Christ, inaccessible back in their homeland. Many Mozambicans were converted when they fled into Malawi and heard the Gospel and have returned to plant churches in their home country.

Africans are on the move, and the Church needs to prepare itself for this opportunity. Church planters in the cities are now forced, for example, to wrestle with the dynamics of multi-tribal churches where believers of diverse languages, ethnicities, and practices can worship together. This is not always easy!

Colonialization, again?

Beginning in the 1950s, African nations began to wrest independence from their European colonial rulers. But is colonization taking place again? Many fear it is. But the new colonization is not of the former political type; it's economic and cultural.

Zambians ask, "Why do the Chinese have to dig *our* copper mines and build *our* roads?" South Africans ask, "Why do we have to buy our shirts made in India? Can't we make our own to dig out of poverty?" With Africa being on the bottom of the economic barrel, many fear an inevitable economic control re-entering the continent. But the fear is not only economic.

Last year, protesters forced the temporary closure of many of South Africa's universities, complaining, in part, that western, colonial biases still dominated tertiary education. They fear *cultural* colonization.

Missionaries and national workers always need to be sensitive to indigenize: train, trust, and turn it over to the locals. Some national believers have asked, "Where are the African teachers in our Bible colleges? Why do our textbooks still come from the West? Why is there still such a heavy missionary presence in indigenous churches?" These questions are not as easy to answer as it may seem, but new missionaries need to prepare to face them.

Heritage vs. progress

The longer you live in Africa, the more you are exposed to the cultural depth and wealth of the people on this continent. But with the onset of globalization, the interconnectedness of the world means that the traditional way of life in Africa is changing. Some praise this change from "superstition to progress," while others lament that African cultural roots are under threat.

Many are wrestling with how African culture can be maintained yet still keep up-to-date with the broader world. The older generation in particular bewails the fact that youth are more interested in computer games than in the traditions of the rural homestead.

Again, this dilemma affects the Church and how our national workers and new missionaries need to think and work. The Church needs to address the growing generation gap in African congregations, the "sins of youth" among the younger generation, and resisting the ever-present idolatrous pull of the West, which is so attractive to many young people here.

Economic disparity

This issue is just not going away. In many countries an encouraging middle class is developing. However, in many areas the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” is widening. After decades of independence from colonial regimes, with power now in the hands of nationals, many on the continent are asking, “Why are we still so poor?” University students have asked me in desperation, “Why can’t we get meaningful jobs after high school or college?”

Yes, “the poor you will always have with you.” (Mark 14:7) But our new missionaries need to grapple with what it means to “give a cup of water in my name” (Mark 9:41), given the desperation and consequences of hopeless poverty. And yet, this is the environment in which the Church has always grown for the last 2,000 years (1 Corinthians 1:28).

Rulers

After half a century of self-rule, why are we still hearing so many complaints about government corruption? People in the villages and urban slums are hungry and don’t have access to basic needs. But why the corruption, overspending, and mismanagement? And why will some rulers not leave office when their time is up? Though I believe the Moravians were correct when they counseled their missionaries to avoid unnecessary political entanglements, God’s Church in Africa has a unique opportunity to show the perfection of Christ’s rule and its challenge to good governance. Like it or not, our new missionaries

will have to develop biblical responses to this complicated matter.

Pray for today’s Africa

Approximately 100 years ago, missionaries to Africa had to prepare to face witch doctors, ancestral spirits, lion attacks, snake bites, and Voodoo. These things are still important. But on top of these, the Lord’s servants need to prepare to serve in urban, impoverished, and diverse contexts.

There is so much good taking place on the continent: the Church is growing and there are many innovative attempts at training church leaders. Pray for those who serve the Church on this continent that they would take the unchanging Gospel and show that it is still relevant to the rapidly changing situation in Africa. ■

The World Bank claims that urbanization will be the single most important factor in the transformation of African society in the next generation.



Karl and Glynn Peterson were commended in 1995 by Ardsley Bible Chapel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Fairview Bible Chapel, Boulder,

Colorado, to serve in Mozambique and South Africa. Karl teaches at the Bible Institute of South Africa in Cape Town and visits Mozambique for leader training seminars.

Learn More!

Read these books to learn more about contemporary Africa.

Africa’s Cities: Opening Doors to the World by Somik Vinay Lall, J. Vernon Henderson, and Anthony J. Venables. Available as a free download at OpenKnowledge.WorldBank.org.

The Church in the African City by Aylward Shorter.

Globalization and Its Effects on Urban Ministry in the 21st Century edited by Susan S. Baker.





Send Them— I'll Go (Visit)

BY JOE CAGLIOSTRO

Have you ever asked yourself, “What is my role in overseas missions?” or “Is God calling me to serve Him in a foreign land?” Living near CMML’s Missionary Guest Home and office has been such a wonderful privilege as it has opened my eyes to the Lord’s work across the globe. It has also forced me to ask myself the questions above. Through innumerable conversations with missionary families on furlough and the various CMML events I have attended, my interest in and care for the foreign mission field has grown. Many missionaries have been emboldened by the example of the prophet Isaiah as God inquired of him, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” The prophet immediately responded, “Here I am. Send me.” (Isaiah 6:8) Perhaps you have not heard this call yourself. Perhaps God has not called you personally to serve Him in a distant land. We have all been called to serve the Lord wherever we are, but you can also have an impact on His work in far-off lands.

At Fifth Avenue Chapel in Belmar, New Jersey, we recently commended three new missionaries in the past year and a half: Teresa Brown (Colombia, *Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 23) and Mike and Melinda Dilione (Jamaica, MPH Day 18). Our local assembly has been blessed with the opportunity to commend many missionaries and missionary families over the years. I have always wondered why so many from our assembly have been led to serve the Lord overseas. I can’t help but think that our close proximity to and involvement with CMML has exposed our hearts and minds to the tremendous needs of people everywhere: the need to hear and receive the good news of salvation through faith alone in the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross (Ephesians 2:8–9) and the need for the Church worldwide to continue to grow in the faith (2 Peter 3:18). I recently had a chance to spend some time with Mike and Melinda Dilione as they serve the Lord with their family in Jamaica (see an overview of their first year in *Missions* April 2017).

I hope that by sharing my experience of visiting one of our newly commended missionary families you will be encouraged to visit a missionary from your assembly.

Encouragement

“Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

The foreign mission field can be a very discouraging place at times. While some commended workers are frequently blessed by seeing many souls come to faith in Christ, there are also



seasons of discouragement. Missionaries may experience this through a variety of hardships such as loneliness, health issues, financial strain, family struggles, spiritual attacks, and conflict within the local assemblies in which they serve. These families experience the same challenges that we face in the comforts of our own communities. Now try to imagine going through these struggles thousands of miles away from home in a culture that you don’t fully comprehend (and that doesn’t fully comprehend you), with little or no support from family. The cross-cultural experience can create challenges in the formation of relationships. While the presence of other believers in a foreign land is helpful, new missionaries may have trouble finding the support system they need due to the cultural differences. A visit from a member of their commending assembly can be such an encouragement to new missionaries going through tough times. Likewise, a visit to a missionary who has served overseas for multiple decades can give them just what they need to keep pressing on.

Speaking from my personal visits to Jamaica, encouragement can be fourfold. Our missionaries were encouraged. I was encouraged. The believers in Jamaica were encouraged. Also, the report on my visit encouraged the believers at my home assembly.

When I think of believers encouraging one another, I am

Top (L-R): The Dilione family; Believers on a Sunday morning; Annabelle and Asher Dilione and I enjoying the beach together. **Above:** An encouraging meal time with the Diliones and another missionary serving the Lord in Jamaica.



reminded of Proverbs 27:17, which states, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." An email can mean so much to a missionary. A letter by mail might mean a little bit more. A phone call can really brighten up their day. Imagine the excitement when you arrive at a missionary family's doorstep.

Support

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
(Galatians 6:2)

In speaking with Mike and Melinda, I learned that they are involved in a tremendous amount of ministries across five assemblies in Jamaica. Their service includes teaching adults and children, evangelism, discipleship, meeting the practical needs of the believers, and encouraging fellowship. When I went to visit, I was able to see the reality of their daily routine so much more than any phone conversation could ever reveal. I told Mike that I wanted to help in whatever way possible. He initially invited me to speak on three different occasions. Before my trip was over, I taught a total of seven times. Seeing the faces of those they minister to and serve alongside opened my eyes to the amount of work they do. It also gave me a newfound understanding of how exhausting it can be.



Despite my efforts to give Mike a break from the teaching ministry on one Sunday morning, he was given other responsibilities that kept him quite busy. The Lord's work is never done. Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Perhaps you can help teach while overseas. You might help with youth ministry. Maybe you will help around the home or watch the kids to give the parents a much-needed break. Whatever support you provide will help to strengthen them. For example, my parents joined me on this visit, and my father put his unique skillset to good use by repairing the Dilione children's bikes.

Supplies

"Bring the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus when you come, and the books, especially the parchments." (2 Timothy 4:13)

The apostle Paul's request for Timothy to bring his belongings to him was a very practical one that needed to be met. In the same manner today, many missionaries serve in areas where some of their everyday supplies are not as readily available. Some of these items can be purchased and shipped to their remote locations, but the process is usually associated with a significant cost and uncertainty of arrival. When I traveled to Jamaica I filled an entire suitcase with supplies that either were not available or were very costly when purchased in the country. I brought toiletries, food, and clothing along with a few gifts for their children. The delivery of these items brought smiles to each member of the family. What a tremendous privilege to witness firsthand the excitement of receiving such simple provisions.



Left (from top): Sharing the Gospel at a public high school; My dad brought his unique set of skills to Jamaica.
Right: Some supplies are not as affordable or available in other countries.



Accountability

"So then each of us will give an account of himself to God."
(Romans 14:12)

William MacDonald wrote an insightful article in the December 1990 issue of *Missions* magazine. It dealt with the issue of accountability among commended workers. In his article, he mentioned that while missionaries are ultimately accountable to God, there exists a degree of accountability, or responsibility, to the commending local assembly. We look at the example of Paul who reported back to his commending assembly (Acts 14:26–28). When a new missionary family is commended from a local assembly, expectations regarding correspondence and communication are laid out in order for that assembly to keep this family accountable. It is wonderful to receive letters and email updates about the work, but it is far greater when one of your commended missionaries comes home on furlough and shares with you what the Lord is doing in another part of the world.



I cannot begin to tell you the joy it was to spend time in Jamaica with the Dilione family as we discussed how the Lord is moving in the hearts of the Jamaican people. Their email updates can only provide so many details. I was overwhelmed with how busy Mike and Melinda are while serving in Jamaica.



Part of my responsibility and pleasure was to return home to Fifth Avenue Chapel and share how God is using the Diliones for His glory. A visit to one of your commended workers not only benefits your home assembly, but it helps remind the workers of their responsibility to the local assembly and their accountability to God.

Will you go?

Immersing yourself in a new country and culture can be incredibly challenging. Serving the Lord overseas is a life-changing experience. Perhaps you have even thought of doing a short or long-term missions trip. I strongly encourage you to consider visiting a missionary commended from your home assembly. Letting your commended workers know that you pray for them is so important. How much greater to visit and pray *with* them! These servants are still a part of our chapel family. Keep in touch with them. A letter can really change a missionary's day. A phone call can mean even more. But a visit can have immeasurable blessings, both for the missionary and the visitor.

They have been sent. Will you go visit? ■

Joe Cagliostro and his wife, Juli, are in fellowship with Fifth Avenue Chapel, Belmar, New Jersey.

Top (L-R): The thrill of receiving simple gifts; Reading to children. **Left:** Visiting missionaries can encourage others to go (my parents decided to come along). **Bottom:** The beach near the Dilione family.



Good News in SLOVAKIA

BY ALLAN BUSSARD

I had traveled to Czechoslovakia for some years before my wife and I moved from Canada to Bratislava with our three children in 1991. Communism had collapsed 18 months earlier, and the country was still in the first stages of transforming its economic and political systems. After a couple of years, we found ourselves not living in Czechoslovakia, but in the newly independent Slovakia, a small nation of 5.5 million people. We experienced firsthand the anxiety and chaos, as well as the optimism and hard work required to build a new country and its institutions. As a close Slovak friend remarked at the time, “When an entire system collapses, everything goes back to zero.”

Any revolution results in a period of chaos and the Velvet Revolution of Czechoslovakia was no different. Major stresses in the early 1990s included: corruption, as former communist officials rushed to grab the spoils; unemployment, as the centrally planned industrial base collapsed; and a brain drain, as many young people left the country in search of other employment opportunities.

As mission workers seeking to bring the Gospel in a relevant

and holistic way to our newly adopted country, we spent the first two years listening, asking questions and praying. We wanted to learn the most effective way in which to incarnate the love of Christ to a people who had faced injustice and upheaval since the start of World War II, 50 years earlier.

One of our first areas of ministry was among students and new graduates. Many people struggled with high levels of anxiety and uncertainty, and almost everyone had lost their job as the state firms they worked for collapsed under the new realities of life in a market economy. We knew students who had no hope of a good job in their field, and they felt unsure about the value of their education and the future job market.

So in 1995, together with some Slovak colleagues, we began the Integra Foundation, a Christian agency focused on poverty alleviation through enterprise development and skills training. After a significant length of time listening and asking questions, it became clear that the best way for the Gospel to gain a hearing would be through practical programs that feed and bring healing to people who had experienced oppression for so long.



Caulene with a sponsored child in Africa.

Life in Slovakia

Slovakia has been squeezed between major empires for centuries. The Russian, Hapsburg, Prussian and Ottoman empires have played tug of war with the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe for the past 500 years. A Kenyan proverb is very apt here, "When two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled." Slovakia has only been an independent state for 20 of the last 500 years. Under the 40-year communist "experiment," the people were cut off from Western Europe. Many who tried to escape paid with their lives. The restrictions were palpable, particularly for the people of Bratislava, the capital, which is only a five-minute drive from Austria and less than one hour from Vienna. Indeed, the vast majority of Slovaks had never been allowed to cross the border prior to the collapse of the Iron Curtain in November 1989. This turbulent history has left its mark as Slovaks struggle to be optimistic about the future and may be wary of outsiders.

Yet, the current generation of Slovak youth have opportunities that their parents could not have dreamed about. They roll their eyes when their parents speak of the deprivations under communism. Slovakia's accession to European Union membership in 2004 brought opportunities for commerce, education, travel and work abroad that have transformed this generation.

Slovakia's central location, membership of the EU and the Euro, and aggressive marketing have resulted in strong economic growth, lower unemployment and a higher standard of living. Bratislava is currently the sixth wealthiest region in the EU. Slovakia is an important center for high-tech and automobile manufacturing, producing more cars per capita than any other country in the world. In 2016 Slovakia produced 1.04 mil-

lion cars. By comparison, the UK, with more than 12 times as many people, produced 1.6 million cars.

However, the new prosperity in Slovakia is not evenly distributed. As one travels east from Bratislava the economy is weaker, with many, particularly among the Roma minority, living in real poverty. The Roma population, nearly 10 percent, lives in isolation with lower rates of education and employment than the rest of the country.

Slovaks speak a language related to other Slavic languages such as Bulgarian, Croatian, Polish and Russian. Slovak is most closely related to the Czech language, with the two groups able to easily communicate with each other.

Religiously, Slovakia is more than 60 percent Roman Catholic, with 85 percent of the people claiming some religious affiliation. Slovaks are much less secular than the Czechs. The majority of Slovaks consider themselves in some way Catholic, with weekly church attendance relatively high at 33 percent. However, in practice, Slovakia is becoming more secular with church attendance among young people declining.

Perhaps in part due to the higher levels of formal religious observance, Slovaks tend to be conservative in regard to traditional values and immigration. Abortion rates are declining, and divorce rates are behind those of Western Europe. The current Slovak government is strongly anti-migrant, famously taking the EU to court to oppose the imposition of compulsory migrant quotas. Despite being asked to accept fewer than 2,000 migrants, the Slovak government prefers to pay punitive fines to the EU rather than open its doors to migrants.

Building the Church

The evangelical church in Slovakia is small, making up less than two percent of the population. However, there are large renewal movements within the Catholic and Lutheran churches. There are also a number of encouraging mission initiatives among the youth, such as alternative worship services and summer festivals, which are enjoying strong growth.

However, for most Slovaks, the good news of the Gospel is understood to be neither good nor news, as memories of centuries of religious conflict and oppression in the name of the Church come to mind. Many think, the Church has been around forever, so what can be new about the message they are bringing? In particular, the Catholic Church suffered huge reputational damage during World War II, when it closely cooperated with Nazi Germany and was complicit in the transport of thousands of Slovak Jews to Auschwitz, all in the name of establishing a "Christian" Slovakia.

Yet Slovakia is not "hard ground" for the Gospel. It is our experience that the Gospel advances even among the secular when it is demonstrated in tangible ways. Over the years, we have been engaged with our Slovak brothers and sisters in education, employment programs for drug addicts, the deaf and handicapped, foster care for abandoned children, poverty alleviation, renewal of the social care system and care for the elderly, sports for the underprivileged and, more recently, resettlement programs for refugees from Syria.

What works is a compassionate approach that seeks to provide an answer, here and now, to the age-old question asked by the teacher of the law to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In calling people to care for the "far neighbor" (the person not like us, who does not share our social status, religion or values) the Gospel gets fleshed out in a way that makes sense to them. As we engage with issues of injustice, those in whose lives God is already at work emerge to join us and gradually find themselves becoming believers in Christ. They finally discover that the Gospel is both good and news, in a way they had never experienced before.

More recently, we have begun to work with churches across Slovakia to engage in missions outside the country. As wealth grows, it is important that Slovak Christians undergo a paradigm shift, from viewing themselves as needy recipients, to those called to reach out to bless a wider world.

As part of this vision, we have launched a sponsorship program for street children in East Africa and are delighted to see many Slovak churches and hundreds of families engaged in giving back. In other words, we see not just missions *to* Eastern Europe but the time has come for missions *from* Eastern Europe.

After living and working in Slovakia for more than 25 years, our friends still ask us if we like it here. For us this is home, a normal place, with things we like and things we do not like. But we are deeply grateful for the visionary Slovak colleagues, friends, brothers and sisters with whom we have had the privilege to work with on that greatest project of all, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth." ■



Allan and Caulene Bussard are commended by Marineview Chapel, Vancouver, British Columbia, and have been involved in evangelism and discipleship training in Eastern Europe and Russia since the mid-1970s.

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From top: Micro-enterprise client; Integra Slovakia staff.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Sixth Annual Youth Conference

BY CRAIG FRITCHEY

Serving the Lord full-time as a missionary should be an option for all believers in Christ. However, often when a young person approaches high school graduation, the only question is "What career path have you chosen?" CMML's "What's Next?" youth conference was designed to ask a more important question: "How will you serve the Lord, both now and after graduation?"

Each spring CMML invites middle and high school students and youth groups to the CMML Missionary Guest Home, located in Wall Township, New Jersey, for "What's Next?" This special day includes sports and group games on the sprawling CMML lawn, a tour of the CMML facilities, a delicious barbecue and a challenging message from a missionary. Throughout the day teenagers have the opportunity to meet and reconnect with friends from New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Maryland in a relaxed and spiritual environment as they think about the next steps in their lives with the Lord.

This year, Christopher Mattix (Bolivia, *Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 21) was our featured speaker. He shared the advice and warnings he would give his "15-year-old self." Chris wove in aspects from his personal testimony with Scripture and biblical principles that led him to the mission field. He challenged the youth to remember that a life lived for self will never compare to a life lived in full surrender to the Lord.

In a culture that tells young people that they are defined by their career, education or financial status, we want them to know that, "Only one life will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last." It is our prayer that through events like "What's Next?" the Lord will raise up another generation of workers for His harvest. We encourage you to organize similar events in your area and to invite missionaries to come to share the amazing ways God is working around the world and how your young people can be involved. ■

Craig Fritchey is CMML's conference and security coordinator.

