



WINDOW



ON THE WORLD

FALL 2008

A PUBLICATION OF THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION

**SPECIAL CENTER SECTION:
Giving Catalog**

VOLUME 20 NUMBER 4

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Recession Lessons *By Randy Sizemore*

I grew up in a recession. The youngest of five children, my financial downturn began at the age of three when my father "moved on" and we were suddenly a single-parent family. The six of us lived in a dilapidated old farm house in the rolling hills of rural York County, Pennsylvania. Our only source of heat was a kerosene burner in the living room, our only indoor plumbing was at the kitchen sink, and usually our only well-balanced meal was the free lunch at school. I know what it is to lack basic necessities, to use food stamps, to wear hand-me-down clothes, to ask others for money, to make a trip to the outhouse in the middle of the night, and to go to bed hungry.

In the 15 years of recession that followed, my philosophy of money and material possessions, and my responsibility to manage them, were forged. One Sunday morning our pastor announced that we were going to collect food for a poor family in our congregation. I went home, looked in the cupboard, and scanned the situation - some canned vegetables, a can of yellow cling peach slices in heavy syrup (the closest thing to a treat in

our house), and the ubiquitous cans of pork-and-beans. As my hand moved from the peas to the pork-and-beans, my heart was pricked and I knew, as mom had always taught us, I was to give the best I had. I reluctantly put the can of peaches in the burgeoning box in the back of the church and never gave it a second thought. What a surprise to learn later that the "poor family" in our church was actually my family and not only did God give me back the peaches, He gave my family everything in that big cardboard box!

I am not advocating a health-and-wealth gospel, the kind that teaches "Give God thirty dollars as a seed of faith and He will return three hundred dollars to you." It doesn't work that way; I know. I have given to God first. I have given God my best and still have gone to bed hungry, have done without and once or twice in college had to rob my son's piggy bank to buy bread. So why give at all? Why give when the nation, the world or your family is experiencing a financial recession? Because Jesus tells us to do it. Our obedience in giving is no more or less important than our obedience in living a holy life, loving our neighbor



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(continued on page 2)



THE PLANE TO SPAIN FLIES EVEN IN THE RAIN

BJ AND RACHEL WHITAKER became the newest EC missionaries to be commissioned for service in 2008 (a banner year!) At a moving and innovative ceremony held on Sunday, November 2nd at Dech Memorial Chapel, Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown PA, BJ was ordained as an elder in the EC Church, and then BJ and Rachel were commissioned together as missionaries. Bishop Emeritus and acting President of ETS, Rev. Michael Sigman brought the message, Bishop Kevin Leiben-sperger led the service of ordination and Rev. Randy Sizemore, Global Ministries Director, led the service of commissioning.

It was a special day in many ways; Rachel's parents Rev. Ron



and Brenda Anderson were able to come from Madrid Spain to attend the service, as well as Rachel's grandparents, Rev. Loren and Helen Anderson from Ohio, former missionaries to Guatemala. Rachel's sister Jenny and her husband Phil Biddulph were up from South Carolina.

BJ's parents, William and Lori Roach from Missouri were also there. A large crowd of friends, family and support-

ers were there to encourage, support, and pray for the Whitakers as they take the final steps towards leaving for Spain.

BJ and Rachel will spend most of December in Colorado for candidate training, and hope to leave for Spain by early January. Please pray that their visas may come through soon, as that is a possible hold up for their schedule. The Whitakers will be involved in church planting, tentatively in the Cordoba region of southern Spain. 🌍

By Pat Strain



(continued from page 1)

or sharing our faith. If I were still a pastor shepherding a local flock through these challenging economic times, I'd be preaching the recession lessons I've learned the hard way:

1. **Simplify, de-clutter and downsize.** You can live with much less than you currently have!
2. **Get out of debt as fast as you can.** Most individuals and families carry a debt load that they would be too embarrassed to say out loud in public.
3. **Spend less.** Food, clothes, cars, lawns, entertainment, and 99 percent of what we are spending on can be obtained for less or totally removed from our budgets without a major negative effect on our families.
4. **Save more.** When is the last time you paid yourself a monthly installment?

5. **Invest in the "eternal market."** By increasing the amount you give to your local church and the Church of Jesus Christ around the world through the Global Ministries Commission, you will never experience those pesky "unrealized gains" of the stock market!

This edition of *Window On The World* is all about giving in the midst of an economic downturn. Page through the updated **Giving Catalog** we've included in this issue and pick a project or two. Read and learn about the fruitful giving to the Launch Liberia project and join in. Celebrate with me the individuals highlighted in this issue who are giving themselves to global ministry in a variety of ways, and understand that giving has little to do with what you hold in your hands and everything to do with what you're willing to let go of. May God's hand move ours to give our very best. 🌍 By Randy Sizemore



If the world were a village of only 100 people, there would be:

- 60 Asians
- 14 Africans
- 12 Europeans
- 8 people from Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean
- 5 from the USA and Canada
- 1 person from Australia or New Zealand

In the village there would be:

- 33 Christians
- 22 Moslems
- 15 Hindus
- 14 Nonreligious, Agnostics, or Atheists
- 6 Buddhists
- 10 all other religions

In this 100-person community:

- 80 would live in substandard housing.
- 67 adults live in the village; and half of them would be illiterate.
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition.
- 33 would not have access to clean, safe drinking water.
- 24 people would not have any electricity.
- Of the 76 that do have electricity, most would use it only for light at night.
- In the village would be 42 radios, 24 televisions, 14 telephones, and 7 computers (some villagers own more than one of each).
- 5 people would possess 32% of the entire village's wealth, and these would all be from the USA.
- The poorest one-third of the people would receive only 3% of the income of the village.

LAUNCH LIBERIA Takes Off

Since 2007 you have been reading and hearing about LAUNCH LIBERIA. This project was created to help our EC churches in Liberia, West Africa to grow and become more self-sufficient.

Soon after the inception of LAUNCH LIBERIA, EC Global Ministries partnered with OMS International to focus on a two-prong approach: church planting and relief & development. Since last year, the EC Church has raised over \$100,000 to help fulfill that goal. Let me share the words of our field leader, Rev. Matthew Gueh:

■ The church planting is going on well.

Our men on the field have planted a total of 35 churches. They are presently training men to take charge of these congregations. The Lord is working mightily in the lives of these church planters.

■ The micro-enterprise project has provided loans

to a total of 62 women of the church. These women are gradually becoming financially (self sufficient.) Some were able to send their children to school while at the same time increase their business.

The monies raised for LAUNCH LIBERIA (\$20,000 of which was from the bike tour this past summer) have already been put to good use. BUT we still have a ways to go. We have pledged to raise \$139,000 for our share of the services that OMS International is providing to our churches in Liberia.

Please continue to keep LAUNCH LIBERIA in your prayers and in your budget for the coming year. Global Ministries Director Rev. Randy Sizemore and GMC member Jerry Virtue will be visiting our churches in January of 2009 to see the work first hand. Please keep them in

prayer for safety in travel and good health while overseas.

We hope to have a video/ DVD presentation available by WORD Day next spring to update you. 🌐 By Pat Strain



WE WANT TO WELCOME Carla Sizemore to the staff of the Global Ministries office. Carla's heart for missions began before she even met her husband Randy, our current Director. As a student at Lancaster Bible College, Carla majored in missions, sensing God's call to serve Him in that capacity.

Well, she got sidetracked a bit by being a pastor's wife and mother to two children, but Carla is thrilled to be able to help us out by serving part time in the office. She will be assisting in answering phones, scheduling missionary speakers, coordinate with our volunteer services committee, assist in bulk mailings, offer hospitality when we serve meals during committee meetings, as well as special projects. Carla's schedule will be flexible, approximately 10-12 hours a week depending on the needs of the other office staff. Welcome Carla, we're so glad to have you with us! 🌐



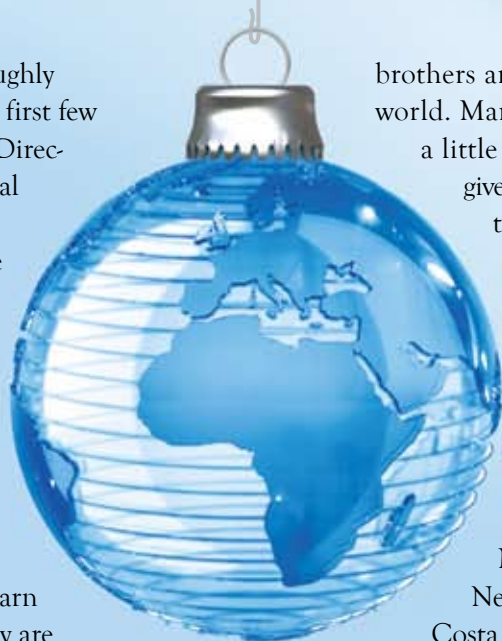


Giving To The Ends Of The Earth

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first few months as Director of Global Ministries.

One of my favorite activities is being able to share with individuals and groups the “global footprint” of the EC Church. Eyes widen and faces smile when they learn just how much they are involved in what God is doing around the world. I usually refer to it as Vance Havner’s “snowflake effect” and explain that while one or two snowflakes do not add up to much, if you put enough of them together they can stop traffic! Together we worship and minister in about 600-650 local churches with approximately 100,000 members who send out 230 strategically placed missionaries. We provide formal, accredited training to over 300 students from among 30 different faith traditions and we are involved in the two-handed gospel as we minister to orphans, widows and the marginalized from every walk of life.

All this is made possible because Christians like you open your wallets, your checkbooks and even your estate planning workbooks and share what God has entrusted to you with your



brothers and sisters around the world. Many of you know that a little over \$1million is given each year to support the 56 missionaries sent out from the EC Church in the USA. You may not know that about \$500,000 a year is needed to fund the international EC Churches in Liberia, Mexico, Japan, India, Nepal, Myanmar and Costa Rica along with the administrative costs of the Global Ministries Commission. The \$1million of missionary support is basically an “in and out” number. What we receive for missionary support we send and what we do not receive we do not send.

While the missionary portion of our budget is sound and secure, the challenge is the \$500,000 needed annually to fund the ministry initiatives of our international churches and GMC administration. We raise these funds in several ways. Some people voluntarily send in gifts earmarked for a particular international church, and some send in gifts marked “general fund” or “undesignated” that we can apply where needed.

We receive two offerings per year, one in spring and one at Christmas, and we do have some investment income, but these sources of revenue are sporadic and tend to fluctuate based on what is happening in the lives of those who are doing the giving. I probably do not need to tell you that these are not the best times for investment income! The Global Ministries Commission members will be using our spring meetings to do some serious strategic planning to examine our current structure, ministry initiatives, aid to our international churches, office expenses, travel schedules, and other areas in order to be better equipped to empower national churches, facilitate mission workers, and minister to the marginalized.

In the interim I ask you to consider the “ends of the earth” in your year-end or special giving in order to allow our vital international churches to not

only continue reaching the lost but to grow in strength and maturity to the point where some of them can be self-supporting. Be sure to mark your gift “undesignated” or “general fund,”

and we will put it to work in the area where it will be most effective. On behalf of all our international brothers and sisters in the EC Church, allow me to say, “Thank You”!

By Randy Sizemore

All this is made possible because Christians like you open your wallets ... and share what God has entrusted to you with your brothers and sisters around the world.



A HEART FOR TEACHING THE WORLD *By Dan Dixon*



In August of 1999 I went back to Kenya, back to Rift Valley Academy (RVA), the school I attended, but this time as a teacher rather than as a student.

For the last ten years, my main assignment at RVA has been as a teacher in the

Bible department at the school. Being a boarding school, we are also involved in other activities along with teaching. I've been involved in our Junior High youth group program called ROCK (Representatives of Christ the King). I've been

a part of the chaplaincy committee at school, helping with Sunday services and teaching 6th grade Sunday School. In my spare time, I also enjoy running and coaching the Junior High soccer program at the school.

I've been here in the United States since last July, and my six month furlough is just about up. I'm leaving to go back to Kenya at the end of December and I'm really looking forward to going back.

While I am there, please feel free to keep in touch with me. My e-mail address is ddixon@kijabe.net. Feel free

to learn more about me on my website, <http://www.danieldixon.org>.

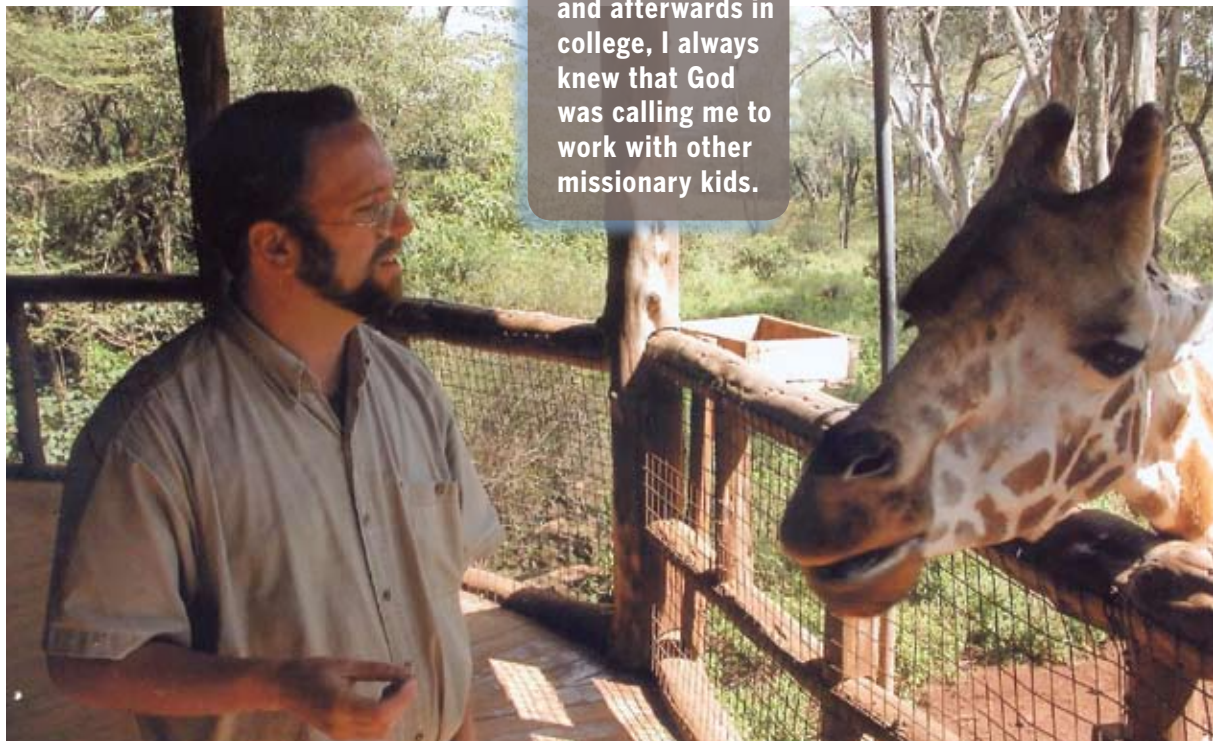


I have had the privilege of being born and growing up in a Christian family. My parents first went to Africa as missionaries when I was three years old.

Growing up in Africa as a missionary kid, and afterwards in college, I always knew that God was calling me to work with other missionary kids. I didn't know how that was to happen, but I knew that I had some insights into the struggles and trials that MK's go through which other kids don't. After being a youth pastor in Harrisburg at Trinity EC Church for a number of years right after college, I felt God telling me that it was time to go to the mission field.

I applied to Africa Inland Mission in January of 1999 and was accepted by them to come to Rift Valley Academy as a teacher.

Growing up in Africa as a missionary kid, and afterwards in college, I always knew that God was calling me to work with other missionary kids.





“We Should’ve Made T-shirts!”

2008 WORLDFEST RECAP

We should’ve made T-shirts. Every exciting event that my kids attend, they come home with an over-priced T-shirt. Why? A T-shirt says, “*I was there, I was a part, I experienced something meaningful with a select group of people, and I want to remember it for as long as I can...or at least until the T-shirt wears out.*” We should have made T-shirts embellished with the cool globe logo and big block letters that spelled WORLDFEST ’08. If they weren’t copyrighted, we could have put those two M&M characters to remind us of the *Missional People, Missional Purpose* theme.

We should’ve made T-shirts so that when we ran into each other, we would remember the showers of blessing at WORLDFEST in Illinois (it would not stop raining), the food, the fellowship, and the fun. “Bethel EC Church in Dixon was such a great host,” we’d say and, “Remember the You Lead presentation and how those kids actually tasted the ground at each point in Alaska?” Some would chime in, “I thought Tom Brey’s recap of the Launch Liberia Bike Tour was awe-

some!” Others will remember Randy Amberman’s heart for the Native Americans in New Mexico or how their hearts were broken, warmed and challenged by all they experienced.

Those attending the Ohio WORLDFEST hosted by Wedgewood Park EC Church in Youngstown may remember the youth lock-in, the Mission Minded Kids program on Saturday or the cool praise band Friday night that was so good even the police came to visit. I’ll remember missionary Jim Farr’s sweet pickle relish (apparently he carries it with him everywhere) and his Bible translation work in Papua New Guinea. Other T-shirt worthy material would include BJ & Rachel Whitaker’s enthusiasm as missionary candidates to Spain and OMS missionary David Dick’s update on the EC Church planting in Liberia.

Last, but certainly not least, was WORLDFEST Pennsylvania. There, we could have sold a lot of T-shirts because we had approximately 200 people attending between the Friday afternoon pastors’ program and the Saturday general sessions. Dan Dixon, missionary teacher from Rift Valley Academy in

Africa showed us how to jump 29 feet! Bishop Leibensperger’s presentation on our transition to becoming a true international church gave us a glimpse into our future. Ralph Owens’ Launch Liberia Bike Tour recap included a lesson on how to survive a dog attack while riding across the country! At all of our WORLDFEST events, we had music, M&M’s, and meaningful experiences as we gathered to celebrate what God is doing in our world and rejoice in the fact that He is using us to do it!

I want to express my deep appreciation to everyone who helped make all three of our WORLDFEST events a

At all of our WORLDFEST events, we had music, M&M’s, and meaningful experiences as we gathered to celebrate what God is doing in our world and rejoice in the fact that He is using us to do it!

success! It takes a lot of people willing to do a lot of things for very little credit to make something like this happen....especially when you have

a new director who begins his term in the middle of the process! We should’ve made T-shirts, but we didn’t. Maybe you’re saying, “I wish I could have been there,” but you couldn’t. Well, there’s always next year! 🌍

By Randy Sizemore

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THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION is the international ministry arm of the Evangelical Congregational Church. With 56 workers in twenty nations, 460 churches in six countries, and several strategic initiatives, GMC is dedicated to mobilizing the worldwide Church into acts of love, service, and gospel proclamation.

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- | | |
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Facilitating Mission Workers

One of the four focuses of the EC Global Ministries Commission is Facilitating Mission Workers. This primarily refers to our commissioned EC missionaries, those who are sent out from our churches in the USA to serve under other nondenominational mission agencies such as Africa Inland Mission or Wycliffe Bible Translators.

What does it mean to facilitate mission workers? To facilitate is to 'make things easier' according to Webster's Dictionary. Part of my responsibilities as Deputy Director of Missionary Care is to help make things easier for our missionaries, at home or abroad. What does that look like? Help can come in many forms – for example, helping to schedule deputation, especially for those serving outside the USA. Helping to find housing for missionaries who return for home assignment, helping them to find medical care if they are staying in an area that is not familiar to them. It can be as mundane as providing information on obtaining a cell phone while in the USA.

Sometimes that help takes the form of sitting and listening to their hearts. Aside from scheduled home assignments, missionaries may be dealing with health problems, family issues, or even struggles within their mission agency. They may need to discuss difficult situations that they don't feel free

to share with their supporters for fear of misunderstanding. Just like everyone else, missionaries need someone to talk to who will listen to them.

Of course, a big part of facilitation is to help with support raising. We work with our approved EC missionaries to make their needs known and to help them raise and sustain the level of support needed to get to the field and remain there.

That's where you come in! Your regular and ongoing support of our missionaries helps them to continue serving where God has called them.

Even in difficult financial times, God reminds us to be faithful and to give so that His work can continue. Prayer support is just as important as

financial support. It takes money to get a missionary to the field; it takes prayer to keep them there. No matter what your personal financial status is, you can pray for and with our missionaries.

Facilitation includes providing you with the information you need to pray well for our missionaries. The EC Global Scene is a monthly prayer letter that gives quick updates on our people in the fields, as well as our GM Director Rev. Randy Sizemore's schedule.

Please remember that he too is one of our mission workers. It lists birthdays of missionaries; please remember them with a card or email. Our *Window on the World* will give you insightful

information and thought-provoking articles about current topics, as well as reports on mission events and upcoming schedules. The Short Stops will inform you about short term mission teams of all natures, so you can network with other churches and get ideas for your own group. Short term mission trips are not just for youth! There is something out there for all ages. Spend-A-Day is a unique program that allows churches or groups to pick a missionary and pray for them for an entire month. This program is administered by Cathy Jo Bast, our Spend-A-Day Coordinator. Missions Minded Kids programs and teaching materials are developed and provided by Kathy Friedlund, our MMK Coordinator.

I have been blessed by the opportunity to serve the Lord at the Global Ministries office and to meet so many of you through missions events over the years. Many thanks to all of you who have supported and continue to support our EC missionaries and mission programs. You are a blessing to those who have answered

God's call to full time missions service. According to the 18th edition of *The State of Church Giving through 2006*, the Evangelical Congregational Church

ranks 6th among 34 major denominations in North America for its overseas missions giving. God bless you and keep up the good work! 🌍 By Pat Strain

To facilitate is to 'make things easier' according to Webster's Dictionary.

A big part of facilitation is to help with support raising.



WORLD OUT-REACH DAY IS BACK!

World Out-Reach Day (WORD) is back! The transitioning Director of Global Ministries position and the enormous task of bringing over 30 international church leaders and delegates to the USA for The Evangelical Alliance of Churches conference (TEACH) in the spring of 2008 caused us to postpone WORD last year. WORD is the informational and intercession gathering of mission-minded individuals from local EC churches. While our fall WORLDFEST is more of

an event-based, regional rally, the spring WORD has been held on the last Saturday of April as a district-led gathering focused around information and intercession for missionaries and global issues. Our last WORD was well attended with 414 people representing all of our 13 districts.

Plan to attend World Out-Reach Day in spring of 2009! I am currently gathering a steering committee to help think through and plan WORD 2009. I am very committed to making WORD a valuable and effective tool

in our ongoing mission of creating global-minded Christians in our local churches. I am completely open to making the format and logistics flexible enough to serve that purpose for any local congregation or district that wants to participate. If you have ideas, suggestions, or a burning passion to be involved in this process, please contact me. For now, **please pencil in the last weekend of April 2009 as World Out-Reach Day.** I'll be in touch! 🌐 *By Randy Sizemore*

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

On January 2, 1988 Pat Strain answered the call to help out the Division of Missions office on a temporary basis after her return from missionary service in Japan. **On January 2, 2008 Pat completed 20 years of service to the mission's arm of the Evangelical Congregational Church through the Global Ministries Commission!** In those 20 years Pat has earned a Master's degree in Counseling and Missions from Evangelical Theological Seminary and has been accepted as a Licensed Minister of Missionary Care in the Alternatives to Pastoral Ministry classification of the National Conference of the EC Church.

Pat's Christian character, concern for those on the front lines of ministry and quality work ethic have been the solid foundation of our mission efforts providing leadership and stability through many transitions, changes and the challenges of spreading of the Good News to every nation. As the fifth Executive Director Pat has worked with, I have heard many missionaries, mission fellowship presidents, and local church members express their appreciation for the ministry of Pat Strain. As we focus on the subject of giving in this issue of **Window on the World**, please join me in celebrating Pat's gift of selfless service to our Lord and His Church. I encourage you to send cards, letters,



notes, emails, and tangible expressions of your appreciation to Pat for her years of service past and let's pray that God would allow Pat to serve for many more years to come! 🌐 *By Randy Sizemore*

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