

Cross-cultural Perspectives from the Director



Missions beyond Return and/or Retirement

This *Cross-cultural Perspectives from the Director* is being written right before the Veteran of Foreign Missions Retreat. I always look forward to spending time with our returned and/or retired soldiers of missions. Although, no longer under official appointment with the Foreign Missions Division, their burden, vision, love, and passion for global missions remains extremely active. Once a part of the foreign missions family, they will forever be part of us. They are not just friends. They are family! They were important to our past and they remain important to our future. I honor each of those that will be attending the retreat or for one reason or another will not be able to attend. This writing is dedicated to you, our veterans of the Foreign Missions Division. I love how Brother Jerry Burns describes the Veterans of Foreign Missions Association: "...a group of over 300 highly motivated and dedicated former UPCI missionaries who are still involved in the fight."

Although, I am sure that you can think of many ways that these men and women can be—and are—involved in missions, I think it would be appropriate to review some of the ways here. As you read down through the list, several things will happen. First of all, you will think of those that have returned home and are filling the roles or points mentioned. Secondly, I wanted everyone to know that I, as the General Director of Foreign Missions, look forward to our veterans being involved in these areas and so many more. Thirdly, for those still remaining on the field, which will eventually return home, we want you to know that there are opportunities that abound when God redirects you or it becomes necessary to return to the homeland.

Here's a short list of involvement opportunities and certainly not limited to the points below:

1. Continue involvement in translation of resources or editing resources that have recently been translated. Both are essential elements in the translation process.
2. Become involved in writing lessons and courses for the Global Association of Theological Studies. Nearly one hundred courses are being put together as part of the new curriculum.

Even if you don't feel up to writing a textbook, there are opportunities for lessons, power points, sermons, etc. to become part of the Course Packet Resources; supplementary material used in collaboration with each of the courses. Contact GATS@upci.org.

3. Start a church in the language or cultural group of your missionary service, or begin a cross-cultural ministry in your area.
4. Continue to visit the field. Within the guidelines of proper relationships, there is ample room, in most cases to return to one's field of labor. Encourage others to take the trip with you. We'll leave the lights on for you! Like someone said, a church without elders has no history. A church without young men has no future. We need both those involved in the past, and those involved in the present, to push us toward our bright future. There is nothing like showing the continuity of a work through various generations.
5. Work, if asked, appointed, or elected as a district director of Foreign Missions. Opportunities abound for sectional foreign missions promoters. I realize there are little thanks that come with the job and lots of work, but it pays eternal dividends, and advances the kingdom globally.
6. Adopt a missionary kid or missionary family into your church or your lives. They will feel safe knowing that you understand what they are going through.
7. Grab any opportunity at missions' education; telling and training others about missions. Encourage prayer for our missionaries and fields.
8. Build strong churches in the homeland. It's the seedbed for missions giving and going. A burden for missions has a way of rubbing off. You will be amazed when young men and women, and even older ones, from your church start expressing a call to missions. In order to have missions support for a growing program we desperately need growing churches in the homeland and abroad. Everything rises and falls on pastors. We are depending on you!
9. Serve as mentors for distance education students. Check out <http://reachingthroughteaching.com> and <http://globalcollegeofministry.com>. These are two of the beginning distance education endeavors endorsed through the Global Education Committee.
10. Host missionaries in your local church. Some of our greatest helpers to missionaries are former missionaries.

Whether at home or abroad, the echo still rings clear, "Tell the lost!" We are called to a lifetime of ministry. May we be found faithful, and walking through each door God opens, for there still is missions beyond our return and/or retirement from official appointment. "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18).