

## ***Cross-Cultural Perspectives***



### **Reflecting and Projecting in Between**

We had a blast of a Christmas with the Howell clan home. Now, the festivities are over and we have gone our separate ways keeping precious memories close to our heart even when our loved ones are away from home. We had a White Christmas and it is still a little cool outside today. It is one of those times when you just want to curl up on the sofa, in front of the fireplace, and read a good book or just think for a while.

Melani Shock, from the Pentecostals of Alexandria, posted a thought provoking tweet this morning. She referred to the week following Christmas and preceding the start of a new year as “the week between.” She claims it is her “favorite week of the year. Reflecting, projecting, and mapping. New beginnings keep us alive.” I like that and consider it to be very important to take time to reflect on the past and project the future. I realize “the week between” will already be passed by the time you receive this Cross-Cultural Perspectives. However, why not take a little time, if you have done so already, to follow Sister Shock’s advice. Rewind; pause a little, before pressing forward.

“No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us” (Philippians 3:13-14, NLT).

If we plan to hit the target, we need to set some goals. I am big on goals. While a missionary in El Salvador, the only year we did not grow, was the year we failed to set goals. When I became the general director of foreign missions, it was natural to talk about setting goals. Yes, we have an open door to an unreached world, but the door is not open forever, and lost souls are dying

daily by the hundreds of thousands. To walk through the open door, and redirect the destiny of the lost, requires more than wishful thinking. It requires aggressive, yet achievable, goals. Ron Blue, in his book, *Evangelism and Missions*, suggests five essential qualities of goals. They are:

- Simple enough to be understood,
- Short enough to be remembered,
- Sensible enough to be achieved,
- Specific enough to be measured,
- Stretching enough to be challenging.

I annually review our goals with our foreign missions leadership team. Each department, ministry, region, and nation is encouraged to set goals. We start this in our planning for progress meetings. We follow up on goals that are set and chart our progress on a regular basis. If goals are not being reached, we ask the tough question, “Why not?” Like any team, we occasionally drop the ball, miss the play, experience problems and defeat. But, we pick ourselves up out of the mud, and hit the field again. We are not called to sit on the sidelines. We are part of the action plan for world evangelism and revival. We are called to the field.

We have a twelve-page “10 Year Goal” booklet. It is jam-packed with goal after goal and concludes with a ten year goal report that annually tracks our progress. I like how the booklet starts: “In keeping with the Foreign Missions Division growth throughout the world, and casting a vision to maintain the momentum, we would like to identify...strategic goals.” I deal with goals here but would like to write later on strategies.

As this article is being written we are awaiting the goals of each one of the FMAC. Each of us looks at our goals from last year and evaluates where we are and sets goals for 2011. The booklet will be finished up at our January Planning for Progress meeting the first week of January and you will receive a copy of it.

We, in the Foreign Missions Division, already have the details of the final victory celebration in mind. I like to call it “end-visioning.” We keep the end in mind and press toward it: “After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Revelation 7:9). We are striving toward that day!