

Seeing Challenges, Solutions, and Horizons

By

Bruce A. Howell,

General Director of Foreign Missions

Seems almost everyone is looking for a hero. Some wildly imagine super heroes, equipped with megapowers, dressed in capes and tights, battling in the forces of good and evil, only brought down by kryptonite or some other outlandish phenomena. Others celebrate and idolize sports heroes struggling to make yard-line progress, chasing or catching pigskin, pursued by hefty opponents. They relish in the adrenalin rush of victory, and shrink under the drain of defeat. In missions, we honor and appreciate spiritual heroes. By faith, they walk into the world of the unknown; unknown languages, unknown cultures, unknown resources, and unknown circumstances. They do not walk by sight. They walk by promise. "I have set before you an open door" (Revelation 3:8). "Every place that the sole of your feet will tread upon, I have given to you" (Joshua 1:3, *ESV*). "I will be with you!"

Admittedly, I wasn't feeling I fit into any category of heroes the early morning I rolled out of bed in Manila, Philippines. I needed to get out for a bit of exercise. I considered jogging, but lacked zeal, or the needed strength or speed. A walk would suffice. I launched into Ayala Street; Manila's Wall Street equivalent. I quickly admired the stunning structures awed by how they painted such a dramatic contrast to what is found in the ghetto areas of every metropolis. Walking briskly through a tunnel I noticed a bank sign. I was captivated by the words, "**See challenges, not barriers; see solutions, not differences; and see horizons, not borders.**" There I stood gazing at the sign quietly memorizing the motto written there. People detoured around me, giving me a suspicious glance. I had found a gem; a bit of signboard theology. It's amazing, a nugget for a sermon by merely paying attention to the world around you. This phrase offers an encouragement to all of our Associates in Missions.

Thank you for doing your part in taking the whole Gospel, to the whole world, by the whole church. Your sacrifice equals souls added to the kingdom. You have stepped forward, many times with limited finances, but armed with a desire and a vision. You see challenges as opportunities, not barriers. You find solutions when faced with problems, not differences. You envision horizons to be conquered, not borders to be restricted.

It has been said that a society without old people has no history, and a society without young people has no future. Could this be aptly changed to a Foreign Missions Division without seasoned, veteran missionaries has no history, and a Foreign Missions Division without the AIM program, the seedbed for the next generation of missionaries, has a dim future? My hats are off to all the heroes of the past. My heart leaps over all the heroes we will have in the future. Thank you for serving on the AIM program. Your future is bright. See challenges as opportunities and friends. Seek solutions. Reach new horizons!

As we step into a new year, and a new decade, may God direct your footsteps and accomplish His will in your lives.