



Forgotten Mission Field!

Many Christians understand the mission field to be a foreign land or a remote village?

How often have you and I heard testimonials/reports from missionaries regarding their successes and challenges on foreign soil? The stories they share enlighten the church of the sacrifices missionaries must endure in order to present the gospel to a spiritually impoverished world. Some risk their life carrying the gospel to Muslim countries. The average believer considers the “mission field” as being outside of the United States. However, I want to remind those who have taken time to read this article to consider other venues—other areas in our lives—where we can be creative and productive witnesses for Jesus Christ. Below are four rich and potentially productive mission fields.

Our Homes: One of the greatest mission fields is our homes—sacred ground. Our children are impacted with the gospel to a much greater degree in the home than in the church. A child or teen will average a few hours each week in Bible study and worship, but many more hours are spent in the home. I can recall a deacon blaming his church for his son's rejection of Christ. He stated, “If we had a youth pastor in the church when my boy was growing up, he would have turned out differently.” Maybe there was some truth to his statement, but the greatest example and teacher for the deacon's son could be seen in the mirror each morning. Every child needs to see daddy and mommy in love with Christ. Sincerely, the Christian foundation is firmly established in the home. It is both taught and caught as little eyes carefully watch mom and dad flesh-out the gospel. Listen, our children can read us like the morning newspaper. Also, I dare not let grandparents off the hook either! My granddaughter, who was with me and Candy at Lowes, observed my concentration and hurriedness (Lowes was about to close) as frustration and anger. She said to her Gammy (Candy), “Why is pappy mad/angry?” In fact, as I reflected on that event, I understood that my lack of attention, hurriedness with an expression void of a smile could easily be interpreted as joyless. One of the greatest mission fields for grandparents are their precious grand-babies. Grandparents must be careful to demonstrate the gospel to watchful eyes. Let me be absolutely clear, the key to being a great witness in the home is to be passionately in love with Jesus. Parents and grandparents filled with the Holy Spirit (“be ye filled” Ephesians 5:18) will penetrate the lives of those living under their roof. Our house should be just as sacred as the church house. The residual affect of a Christian home has the potential of transforming their neighbors.

Our Neighborhood: Years ago, my good Christian friend, Ross, had a neighbor that literally squeezed 10,000 dollars from his pockets. Ross had built a home too close to his neighbor's property line. Either he had to move the foundation ten feet or pay a thousand dollars per foot. There was absolutely no grace given by his neighbor even though the county inspector was willing to waive the discrepancy. I shared with Ross that the graceless act by his neighbor had to be overcome with love and forgiveness. I quoted a passage that was not immediately understood: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” Romans 12:20-21. “That seems cruel,” said Ross. I explained that it was similar to Isaiah 6 where an angel took a coal from God's alter and placed it on Isaiah's lips. The coal was cleansing, healing and purifying. Loving your enemy is a powerful tool to open the eyes of the lost. Now, I know I've also opened a can of worms, but I want you to see that the real issue/focus must be his neighbor's redemption. I personally new Ross's neighbor. He was an alcoholic and a miserable man. His heart was void/empty of the presence of God. Listen: Our neighbors must SEE the gospel fleshed out in our lives which often paves the way for a verbal witness. Pray often for your neighbors and reach out to them...be intentional. God will use your efforts to crack open the most difficult heart.

Our Work: We rub elbows 30 to 40 hours a week with work associates. Our employment can be one of the most productive mission fields. Yet, sometimes Christians spoil their witness by displaying both positive and negative attitudes. For example, on Monday morning many of God's people enter the devils den (the work world). The work place can be both cold and harsh. Yet, if we can view our employment as our mission field, God will give us incredible opportunities to share the gospel. We must fix in our minds/hearts on the fact that God made each of us His ambassador. In other words, God needs willing vessels in every sector of life. It is counterproductive if our heart is not fully vested in being God's representative in the workplace. You cannot whine about a job assignment and assassinate the boss with your loose tongue and expect to be an effective witness. Listen: Genuine salt and light will create an atmosphere that will make people thirsty for God. There is another fertile field that few ever consider—the church.

Our Church: The church is perhaps one of the best places to cast one's gospel net for a catch. Many years ago, Dr. Billy Graham surmised that 75% of the church membership was not born again. As a former pastor, church members would be visibly irritated when I would ask them to share with me their salvation experience or to answer the question: “If you were to die tonight and stand before Jesus and He were to ask you, ‘Why should I let you in My heaven, what would you say?’” From personal experience I have observed members (even church leaders) espousing a works based answer when given the salvific question above—“I have treated people with respect”—“I have been baptized”—“I read my bible and pray everyday” —“I am a good person,” etc. Many seekers visit churches on a regular bases, yet very little is done to reach them. Having visited a fair amount of churches, many are impersonal. For well over a year Candy and I visited a sizable church. Sadly, only one person asked me my name. In fact, I asked the associate pastor to simply give my wife a call while I was in Africa to invite her to the membership class. He refused. Without question there are some attending church who are content with being anonymous. However, many come to Sunday service hurting, seeking and desiring to be touched/loved by God's people and to hear the truth proclaimed. If the church would show kindness and love, many would be drawn to the Savior. Yet at best, form letters are sent to visitors, but not much more is done. Pastors are even shying away from giving an invitation. One prominent leader in Baptist circles even discourages praying the sinners prayer with people. Personally, I believe a requisite for people going on short-term mission trips should be that they have prayed with one or more people to receive Christ. Don't miss out on being a missionary in your home, in your neighborhood, in your work place or in your church. He has called all of us to be His representative to a lost and dying world. Let's get to work...the laborers are few but the fields are ripe.

Rick

MISSION LINK'S NEWS BRIEF:

STREET KIDS FUND NEEDING CONTINUED HELP: We have a child, Azam, that we took off the street at age 9. Academically, Azam has done very well in school. If funds are not available by December, we will have to make arrangements for him to attend a government school. Azam loves his present school and headmaster who treats him like a son. If his school does not go up in price, we will be paying approximately \$155 per term (3 in a year) plus school supplies and clothes. In other words, around \$600 annually. To move him to a government school, Asam still needs \$135 x 3 or \$400 per year. Can you help us keep in school? In fact, if three donors team together, they can keep this little boy off the streets or at best keep him in his present school.



PHASE II — MLI PASTORS SCHOOL IN ELDORET, KENYA — Any amount given is appreciated. We presently need over \$8000 for foundation & framework. If a miracle takes place while Rick is in Uganda, he will travel to Kenya to start the ground work.

DEAF SCHOOL IS MEETING A CRITICAL NEED: (On going needs) The sponsorship for this school has been a blessing. The ongoing monthly needs for food is around \$370. Other monthly needs: Dorm for kids \$70; salaries for 5 teachers "in total" is \$250 (minimum). The school has increased the number of students requiring additional funds. Please pray for the staff, children & school. Please visit our web site (currently being remodeled) for additional information about the school—www.missionlink.org.



MEDICAL FUND HAS NEEDS: We continue to have medical needs on a ongoing basis. One of our pastors (Pastor Charles) was diagnosed with diabetes five months ago. Each month we help him purchase "test strips" for a glucometer (\$19). Any gift to our medical fund is much appreciated and will assist MLI with various medical needs.

COW PURCHASE FOR PASTOR JAMES (MLI'S HEAD TEACHER)— Pastor James has requested assistance to purchase a milking cow. A neighbor must sell his cow and MLI wants to assist our brother. James is still needing \$175. The cow produces 12 liters of milk per day that will give James additional and much needed income. Would you consider helping this the man of God? He is a tremendous asset to MLI.

COMPUTERS/FUNDS FOR KENYA: A team has begun to form for our June trip. Not only do we need MAC and WIN computers (or funds to purchase them), we need you. Contact our office for more info. Rick's email is: thelinkoffice@gmail.com. He will be able to answer your email from East Africa.

BUVUMA ISLAND GRADUATION: Our Mission Link Class on Buvuma Island, Lake Victoria is on the 28th of October. Your assistance is needed in two areas. 1) Our budget of \$275 will assist MLI to supply refreshments, certificates and transportation to and from the island by boat. 2) Near the school is our church plant requiring cement for the bricks. One bag of cement is \$9.25. Your help is greatly appreciated.

GENERAL FUND'S — While in Africa, Rick will be inundated with requests for help. The needs will range from medical, to rent, to school fees, to food. There is always a constant cry for help. It is never ending and a major stress point having to say no to so many. Rick will leave on September 28th and will return to the office mid-November. Remember, when giving to other projects or ministries, please consider a small gift to our general fund. Thank you so very much.

Please check out our remodeled web site and share your comments. Sign up for our email "News Brief" at the bottom of the home page. The site is updated several times a month.



Will you ask? By simply asking your friends and neighbors, work buddies, Sunday School Class, Church to send MLI their old cell phones (usually sitting in a drawer collecting dust), it will help us raise some much needed funds to fuel our ministry.

Used laptops (Mac or Win) are needed by January 10, 2018 for our Kenya mission. Thanks you—



TWO TRIPS FOR 2018

Uganda Mission Trip - February 9-23, 2018 — Dates are set and 25 tickets locked. Cost for the entire trip is \$2900. However, all those who signup by **October 7th** will receive a \$175 scholarship. Each person will have three stow bags, which gives us space to carry computer equipment for Kenya. This will be an exciting trip as we will be going back on the island in Lake Victoria and work with several churches. Contact Rick if you have questions - thelinkoffice@gmail.com or call Cell: 434-981-9101 or Office: 434-984-1995.

Kenya Mission Trip - (fixed dates) June 16-29, 2018 — All interested people will need to secure their airline ticket. At this point, our trip cost in June will be 12 days in country \$1450 (each getting their own ticket, insurance and visa.) If we should do extra things (eating out, safari, etc.) volunteers will incur additional cost. We will have to arrange for different pickups at the Nairobi airport and departures. In other words, people need to leave the USA on the 16th, arrive in Nairobi on the 17th and fly out of Nairobi on the 28th and arrive in USA on the 29th. In country time is 12 days. This schedule gives returning volunteers the weekend to rest before going back to work. We may ask people to surrender one stow bag for additional things for other ministry opportunities that our group may have in Kenya. I would encourage you to promote the trip, which will be 16-29 of June.



Bring Happiness to an African Widows for only \$30 a Month!

For **\$30** a month (just a dollar a day) you can make a difference in the life of a widow. Your support will help pay for school fees, medicine and much more. **So very little makes a BIG difference....**

Nagudi Saidha is 65 years old. Her husband died October 2010 of HIV leaving her HIV Positive with 4 children. **Testimonial:** Saidha was a Muslim but accepted the Lord while fellowshipping with the widows MLI widows in Mafubira. Saidha thanks God for Mission Link for taking good care of her through basic necessities like water filters, cooking charcoal stoves, spiritual fellowship with widows. Because of these encouragements she feels a sense of belonging and full of hope. **Challenges:** Saidha is still renting where she stays and where she does some farming. One of the children is dumb and paying schools is a challenge for her. Treatments with ARVS is accessible but additional medicines is challenge.