



David Reed (left) leads a session on “How our stories are tied together” during IM’s Conference for Missionaries.

## Spiritual Care for Missionaries

BY DAVID AND JOYCE REED

*We’re so excited to send missionaries to serve, but who walks beside them when things get tough?*

We served for fifteen years in Southern Baja, Mexico. During those years we began to understand the need for spiritual care for global servants. Isolation,

loneliness, exhaustion, and cross-cultural fatigue are constant companions in cross-cultural mission. One of our colleagues shared the following about life as a missionary:

“Many could look at the life of a missionary, especially after reading their newsletter or hearing them speak, and think they’re spiritual giants going from victory to victory. They’d never guess that they may be barely hanging on. Whether a missionary experiences success



Dear Mission Partner,

Warm greetings in the name of our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I trust the fall has brought reminders of God's faithfulness across the generations.

On the brink of our 210th anniversary, I'd like to invite you to our first-ever global World Mission Conference. May 21, 1814, is our founding date, and **next May we are planning for a highly interactive online World Mission Conference that will include international partners, your global servants, and YOU!** More details to come, but do start thinking about church-wide, Bible-study wide, region-wide, and local gatherings through which we can participate together online.

Our 210th year is a good time to renew our commitment to those practices that best support our missiology to serve incarnationally and with long-term commitment to our partners. For example, did you know that one IM distinctive is our requirement that all global servants must complete one year of language study? For those eager to begin to serve this can be a difficult year of patiently studying hard, but IM remains committed to this level of preparation because it allows us to build relationship and partnership in the heart language of those we seek to come alongside. You can read more about this on pages 4-5 of this newsletter.

Another IM distinctive is our commitment to provide ongoing emotional support for our global servants, which we call "Member Care." Ten years ago, when we celebrated our 200th anniversary, one of the themes

that surfaced was a call to quality member care. Global Servants David and Joyce Reed heard a call to serve the community of their colleagues and began to think strategically about how they could do this. You can learn more from the Reeds in our cover story. Their ministry is making a significant difference.

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations ... from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90:1-2). The words of the psalmist remind me to celebrate God's consistency and faithfulness. I pray that our 210th anniversary will unite us to celebrate our shared IM history together.

To God be the glory,

Rev. Dr. Sharon T. Koh  
Executive Director / CEO



Inspired by what you read in this issue? If you would like to equip IM global servants to share the gospel, please use the enclosed reply envelope to send your gift of support or donate online: [www.internationalministries.org](http://www.internationalministries.org). You can help us reduce costs when you receive an electronic instead of print version of this newsletter. To do that, create (or log into) your account at **portal.internationalministries.org** or email us at **imdonorservices@internationalministries.org** with your name and address.

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# Spiritual Care for Missionaries

*Continued from cover*

or failures, acceptance or rejection, in a cross-cultural mission context, sooner or later they will find themselves in a wilderness, either thrust upon them or one of their own making. That's just the nature of living and working cross-culturally."

In 2019, we celebrated twenty years as IM missionaries. Two weeks later we officially stepped into a new mission calling with International Ministries as Global Coordinators for Spiritual Care.

**In this new role, we are the ones who show up and walk beside global servants** after they begin their ministries and during life transitions, helping them to navigate outside and inside vulnerabilities. We provide safe, sacred space to process the twists and turns of cross-cultural life.

Our vision is a community of resilient, regulated, Christ-centered leaders who thrive for the long haul. Our mission is to shepherd global servants as they navigate the complexities of life and ministry in a cross-cultural context.

There are four pieces at the core of this vision and mission of spiritual care: **C**ontainment, **A**uthenticity, **R**est, **E**mbodied in Christ.

**CONTAINMENT** means that an intentional space has been crafted to hold people and their stories. I am safe *and* my story is safe within a community. As human beings, we want a place without judgment, where we can show up even though we don't have it all together.

**AUTHENTICITY** is developed over time as people choose to invest in one another. It is deciding to be real, to let our true selves be seen. It is vulnerable, and scary, yet profoundly sacred. We have served in missions for over two decades, and have experienced many of our colleagues' struggles firsthand.

**REST** is acknowledging that life is not sustained by constant motion. Rest is a conscious choice to slow down, to stop, to savor life. The Bible teaches a rhythm of work and rest. Last year one of our colleagues stayed in our home for three weeks. We created a space where



IM Global Coordinators for Spiritual Care Joyce and David Reed

she could be herself with no expectations. She was so grateful to have a chance to simply *be* with Jesus, instead of always *doing* something for Jesus. Sabbath rest quiets the confusion, so we can find our way again.

**EMBEDDED IN CHRIST.** Choosing to live in another culture is a decision to be embedded in the mystery of Christ. Every day is an invitation to surrender to things you don't fully understand. You're surrendering to another language. To different food. To alternative customs. To new expressions of worship and community. Honestly, some days it can feel like you're unraveling in the midst of constant transition. This is exactly when you need to be reminded that "Christ holds all things together" – even you. A focus of our ministry is reminding global servants that no matter what happens, in Christ, all things hold together.

**The spiritual care of global servants undergirds IM's legacy of incarnational ministry. IM is one of the few remaining mission organizations that still focuses on long-term mission service.**

Many organizations have shifted to short-term mission experiences of two to five years. However, our missiology says that the longer you stay, the longer you invest in relationship, the longer you actively immerse yourself in someone else's context, then through humility and grace, the presence of Christ becomes tangible and real. This is when transformation happens – within us (the global servants) and within the communities where we serve.

*To learn more about David and Joyce's unique ministry or to help support them, visit: [internationalministries.org/author/dj-reed/](https://internationalministries.org/author/dj-reed/).*



Global Servant Jae Stockton (left) with women in Oaxaca, Mexico

## A global servant's first step is language study

*Three reasons why International Ministries requires its global servants to commit a year to language study before they can begin full-time cross-cultural ministry.*

### **1 International Ministries follows the incarnational model of Jesus, who humbly entered humanity's experience as a servant.**

"One way IM global servants do this is by embedding themselves in their host culture, including the host country's language," says Associate Executive Director for Global Mission Jim Bell.

"Language is key to connection," says Jeni Pedzinski, who served vulnerable women at the New Life Center in Thailand for seven years before becoming International Ministries' Director of Mission Mobilization. "When I open my mouth and speak Thai, I communicate far more than whatever my message is – I communicate value for Thai people, their culture, and their country. I communicate that I am a learner, not a benefactor. We step immediately into a relationship 'at the elbow' – that is to say, alongside one another. This practice embodies IM's missiology in every way."

After her initial period of language study, Global Servant Faye Yarbrough is continuing her study of the Xhosa

language with a local tutor in South Africa. She says, "Although English is spoken everywhere, and I am still speaking Xhosa like a child, I would not change taking the time to study Xhosa. Learning Xhosa deepened the attitude that I was a servant coming alongside my colleagues at Teleios Christian School. Xhosa is the first language of most of the students at the school. They know learning Xhosa is hard, but at times they only know Xhosa words to convey how they are feeling. And I love to worship at the school and with friends in Xhosa."

### **2 People and communities can most fully experience God's grace and follow Jesus when they hear the gospel in the context of their own culture and heart language.**

Global Servants Stacy and Tim Reese recently completed ten months of language study in Mexico. They are now preparing to begin a ministry of discipleship and community development among Haitians in the Dominican Republic. "One thing I appreciated was the fact that most of my classes were led by local Mexicans," Tim explains.



“Language and culture cannot be separated. No learning app or textbook can replace the insights the facilitators bring as cultural insiders.”

Jeni illustrates it this way: “Imagine what it would be like if your English-speaking church called a new pastor who only spoke Polish. Or imagine someone reaching out to your church, offering to organize community services and outreach – but they only spoke Zulu. What if they planned to stay for years but didn’t feel it necessary to learn the language your community spoke? What would that say to you? How effective do you imagine they would be in ministry? There was no way I could be effective unless I learned Thai, and learned it well enough not just to ‘get by’ but enough to be fully present, engaged, attentive, inquisitive,



Jeni Pedzinski works on language translation with a New Life Center co-worker in Thailand.



Faye Yarbrough speaks with a woman at her church in South Africa.

and encouraging. I came to love the Thai language because it was a bridge into the hearts and lives of those I served.”

### **3 Studies of long-term effectiveness and personal well-being of global servants show that having the capacity to communicate effectively in the language of their host country contributes significantly to the spiritual, mental, and emotional health of the global servants themselves.**

Global Servant Jae Stockton recently completed language school and began serving seminary students in Mexicali. “Having been to language school, I feel more confident to be able to handle a task – as simple as going to the *frutería* (fruit store) or the *panadería* (bakery) and not being scared

of communicating,” she says. “I will admit, it’s not easy, but in a situation where no one speaks English, even though I know my grammar isn’t always correct, I just ‘go for it.’ My broken Spanish has become an instrument for building relationships. Learning the language before I began ministry gave me the tools I needed, and the attitude that ‘Yes, I can do this!’”

Immersion into a new language and culture isn’t easy for anyone. “But God has shown himself in many ways,” Tim says, “and the challenges we faced were as much a part of the learning process as the class time and homework. God is doing great things, and worshipping together is a small taste of heaven, a glimpse of what every knee bowing, and every tongue confessing will be like.”



Stacy and Tim Reese recently completed ten months of language school in Mexico.



# Invest in your legacy

By Katie Boatwright, Chief Strategy Officer

In the tapestry of life, some threads are woven so intricately that they become the very fabric of our being. Such is God's call to serve in God's mission to restore a hurting world.

Jesus' call to go and make disciples has guided our lives as Christians since he spoke those words over two thousand years ago. **As you look back at God's work through IM over the centuries and look forward with dreams of what God might do, you have an opportunity today to perpetuate this call to serve the gospel that has shaped our lives.**

The power of giving resonates deeply within us. It is a call to invest not just material resources, but to invest in the legacy of individual and community transformation, of the Holy Spirit at work, that we have seen throughout IM's history. A legacy endowment gift transcends a financial transaction; it's a testament to the core values that have shaped us. Just as a tree extends its branches to provide shade for generations, through a legacy endowment, you provide the seeds for cross-cultural ministries that will bear fruit in future generations.

As we visit with our supporters, many people tell us that they love IM and wish they could do more to support mission or their favorite missionary. For many of us, there are simple ways in which we can continue, extend, and even increase our impact that won't affect our daily budget. There are many legacy gift options available, and IM's donor advisors can help simplify this process for you.

Planning your legacy today embodies a faith in Christ that extends beyond the horizon of your own life. You will bear witness to Christ in a way that can reverberate through generations, as thoughtful planning builds foundations today that God can use to meet tomorrow's needs.

**Let's begin a conversation** that could save you time and money, provide you with information tailored to your situation, and answer questions. To learn more, you can email me ([kboatwright@internationalministries.org](mailto:kboatwright@internationalministries.org)) or IM's Director of Development Marc Kirchoff ([mkirchoff@internationalministries.org](mailto:mkirchoff@internationalministries.org)). We look forward to learning more about how we can help you!

*"We wanted to share something beyond our own lifetime toward what has been important in our lives all along."*

*- Rev. Dr. Lee Riggs and Mrs. Lynn Riggs  
on why they met with an IM donor  
advisor to plan their legacy.*





# project

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## SPOTLIGHTS



### GLOBAL PEACEMAKERS MENTORING PROJECT

Provide biblical training and resources to equip sixty women and sixty men in conflict transformation. In many countries, the pre-war, war, or post-war context brings a desperate intensity to the need for more trainers to share their conflict transformation skills. These workshops equip participants in the areas of conflict resolution, mediation, dealing with diversity, nonviolence, community organizing, trauma healing, and reconciliation. (Pictured: International Associate Global Servant Lance Muteyo, right)



### HOUSE OF HOPE MEDICAL AND DENTAL SUPPLIES (BOLIVIA)

Support monthly mobile medical and dental clinics that care for more than five hundred indigenous people in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Cochabamba is the third largest city in Bolivia, and yet 85% of dental cavities go untreated. Your support through this project led by Global Servants J.D. and Rhonda Reed will give equipment and supplies for two mobile dental clinics and one medical clinic each month, providing care on a regular basis.



### CHILDREN OF NIGHTLIGHT EMPLOYEES (THAILAND)

Help pay school fees and improve literacy for the children of NightLight employees. Led by Global Servants Annie and Jeff Dieselberg, NightLight offers dignifying employment and personal development opportunities for women who have come out of prostitution or trafficking in Thailand, or who have been at risk of prostitution or trafficking. When you help pay these fees, you help to break the cycle of prostitution and exploitation.



### SANGTAM PIGGERY (INDIA)

Your gift will help establish a pig farm in remote North East India among the Sangtam people that will bring economic development and improve nutrition. The United Sangtam Baptist Lithroti Ashimukhong Churches Association, an IM partner, anticipates that this ongoing project will benefit the 30,000 church members and up to six neighboring communities through economic development.

To give to these or other projects, visit  
[www.internationalministries.org/category/projects](http://www.internationalministries.org/category/projects)

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## THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO VISITED WITH US AT THE **AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT IN PUERTO RICO!**

It was a joy to worship with you and celebrate all God is doing around the world.

